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JOAN!!!

A

NOVEL.

BY

MATILDA FITZ JOHN.

You have no great pretenſions ſo wit or ſprightlineſs of genius.—I grant it.

MARC. ANTONIN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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To the Memory of
A DEPARTED FRIEND,
who to Beauty of Perſon, Elegance of
Manners, Solidity of Underſtanding, and
the Accompliſhments of
Genius and Education,
Added
the ſtill more valuable Graces of
A truly Chriſtian Character,
This Work,
begun under her encouragement, and
completed, alas! in the laſt hours of
ſocial intercourſe,
is inſcribed by her who beſt knew
her Worth,
and moſt enjoyed
her Confidence.

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JOAN!!!

CHAP. I.

A Letter from the family apothecary, ſetting forth at large in *Angliciſed Latin*, or in *Latinized Engliſh*, what might perhaps have been nearly as well expreſſed in the ſentence, "Sir, your father is dangerouſly "ill with the gout in his ſtomach," rouſed the indolent ſpirit of Lambert Byram from its noon-tide doze. He was at the pains of reading the ſcientific epiſtle twice; and then, being ſatisfied that it did not contain any intimation of his father's wiſh to ſee him, he comforted himſelf that he was ſpared the neceſſity of a journey in November, and, thruſting the paper under his pillow, was about to repair the fracture of his nap,

when he was again disturbed by a *morning visit* from a fellow-idler who inhabited the same staircase, and who being too much the counterpart of Lambert to find better amusement, exerted himself so far as to swear he would see him *unkennelled*. They sat down to a lounging breakfast together, discussed what they could recollect of the pastimes of the former evening; and then Lambert, having no other topic ready, mentioned the letter he had just received. His friend, rather less dead to *prudence*, though perhaps equally uninfected with the superstitions of *duty*, having first kindly cursed Lambert for a fool, in suffering the old man to die without securing his own interests by his presence, insisted on his setting out instantly for Bath, ordered a chaise for the purpose, gave directions for packing his portmanteau; and having declined sharing his labours, saw him set off from the Temple, not without a hope that his friendly exertions would be repaid by the good effect this apparent filial piety might produce

produce on the ſtate of a purſe, he often, notwithſtanding his natural apathy, was uſed to apply to.

Impelled by no affection, occupied by no anxiety, young Byram felt in all their force the inconveniences attendant on his way and the ſeaſon of the year: he therefore needed little argument to induce him to accept the urgent offer of an old friend of his father's, who entered the town of Reading on horſeback, with his chaiſe, and who recognizing him before they reached the inn, which leaves behind it all that the place has to boaſt of chearfulneſs, hailed him, and preſſed him to ſpend the evening with him at his vicarage, about a mile and half off. The parſon led the way: the poſt-boy followed; and Lambert felt ſomething like the glow of ſatisfaction, or at leaſt of animal warmth, when he found himſelf ſeated in a neat parlour near a good fire. It diſturbed not his placid ſpirit to perceive evident ſymp-

toms of female flight on his approach: he heard without concern the clatter of high heels, and the thouſand appeals to the diligence of the ſervants. A conſultation, which appeared a neceſſary prelude to the ſupper, reached his ears in accents that beſpoke no unanimity between his hoſt and ſome one of not much inferior authority; but the matter was preſently adjuſted: a decanter of good port followed the maſter of the houſe in his return to the parlour; and Byram had almoſt forgotten the errand he was neglecting, and forgiven the previous diſcontents of his journey, when the buſtle of ſupper-preparation, which till then had been heard, like the din of war, only at a diſtance from ſocial life, pervaded the apartment, and diſcompoſed him by ſetting the major part of the furniture in motion. An ancient damſel, whoſe buſtling habiliments declared her not to have had time to ſit down ſince ſhe left her toilet, followed by a clear-complexioned girl, whom Byram almoſt opened

his

his eyes to look at, entered, performed the pantomime of ſetting out the table, and then withdrew. To this manœuvre ſucceeded perfect ſilence; the ſupper being then ſpoiling, by waiting till the young lady of the houſe ſhould have completed her endeavours to charm the handſome ſtranger from *Lunnon*, who had been moſt emphatically deſcribed to her by experienced Rachel, and on whom her father, the Reverend Anſelm Rufford, had in five minutes after he had ſecured Byram for his gueſt, turned his thoughts for his ſon-in-law. With admonitions to his wife to ſhew by her table *how well they were to do in the world*, he had mixed ſome hints to his darling daughter, calculated to have embarraſſed timidity, and equally well ſuited to render confidence diſguſting.

Mr. Rufford was a man whoſe courſe of life had uniformly tended to enamour him of the good things of this world, without encreaſing his practical acquaintance with

its viciſſitudes: he *could* indeed, and frequently *did* deſcant from the pulpit on the inſtability of human poſſeſſions, the little value of life's beſt comforts, and the frail tenure by which we hold even our exiſtence; but as in his clerical orations he ſeldom truſted himſelf beyond the compoſition of an *oleo*, he was not greatly to be reproved if his greedineſs of church-preferments, and his aſſiduous indulgence of ſome propenſities not much allied to abſtinence, militated in a trifling degree againſt the precepts he held forth once a week to the ruſtics of his pariſh of Milham Parva. He had ſpent the early part of his life on his father's farm, to which he would have ſucceeded, had he not been allured to take orders by the proſpect of equal advantage with leſs labour: he had ſhuffled through the common routine of college exerciſes, juſt ſteering clear of diſgrace and reprobation; and as he aimed more at ſubſtantial gratifications, than at the chimeras ſought by the votaries of fame, he felt no aukward ſenſations

tions of conſcious inferiority, when a valuable family friend, to whom a tottering reputation made obſequiouſneſs very grateful, heaped on him a plenitude of church-benefices. His clerical income thus exceeding the uſual average of country preferments, he was enabled to gratify his principal paſſion, which was good eating, without abridging himſelf of any of thoſe other neceſſaries of life, which inſolence makes covetouſneſs gaſp for.

A mode of life exactly the ſize, or perhaps a little larger, than the means of ſupporting it, might have abated ſome part of the felicity Mr. Rufford looked on as his birthright, had he ſuffered himſelf to be anxious for thoſe who might exiſt after him; but his daughter, dear as ſhe was to him, he conſidered as ſufficiently provided for, by three thouſand pounds bequeathed to her by a relation; and his wife, he thought, he ſhould outlive: perhaps hope increaſed his belief—at all events, he thought ſhe

had ſo good a chance of being provided for, either by a dependence on her daughter, or by thoſe inſtitutions which befriend the diſtreſſed relatives of the church, that he could not abridge his own comforts, to provide for a contingency ſo improbable, as her wiſhing he had died in affluence.

Perhaps it was Mr. Rufford's penetration of his wife's character that made him eaſy in his conduct—She was what is ſo emphatically expreſſed in our vulgar tongue, by the term *a daudle*: in her opinions ſhe was poſitive, and in her mode of enforcing them often violent; but her energies were not laſting enough to ſhew themſelves in action: ſhe lived for herſelf, a cypher in ſociety.

No ſuch negative character was Miſs Rufford. She had been neglected by her mother, and flattered by her father, from her earlieſt infancy; and taking due advantage of her ſituation, ſhe ruled in all matters,

matters, excepting thoſe of the table, where her father was lord paramount.—Let it not be ſuppoſed, however, that the important Miſs Rufford condeſcended to inſpect the œconomics of the houſehold—it was her temper, not her underſtanding, or her forethought, that governed the family—the executive part ſhe performed by deputy, ſtill, however, exquiſitely tenacious of her ſuppoſed rights, and uſurping in all points, except where blame was to be apprehended, the tribute paid to domeſtic prudence.

She had reached the reſpectable age of thirty-five, not indeed without opportunities of exchanging her life of celibacy; but the invincible fortification her three thouſand pounds had proved to her pride, had always kept her in waiting for a ſuperior offer; and as ſhe had as yet ſmitten nothing higher than an apothecary, ſhe could boldly aſſert her preference of a ſingle life. The whole buſineſs of her exiſtence being to

make viſits, and prepare for making them, her intellectual faculties were uncorrupted by education; but a certain acrimony of nature, which the honeſt vivacity of her tongue never allowed her to diſguiſe, made her ſometimes appear deficient either in good ſenſe or good nature, and therefore leſs acceptable, than a gentlewoman ſo little entitled to ſuperiority, is generally found in a rural card-party. In inertneſs ſhe might have reſembled her mother; for the whole year could not produce a veſtige of her induſtry; but her father's temper predominating, with the addition of ſome natural qualities, rendered her ſelfiſh, artful, malicious, and buſy.

To theſe two ladies was Lambert Byram introduced as they entered the room; and either to Mr. Rufford's port wine, or to ſomething peculiarly *attractive*, we will preſume, in the appearance of his daughter, it is to be attributed, that he rivetted his eyes on her with a broad ſtare—The exertion

exertion was not loſt on the lady—a ſmile of infinite ſelf-complacency ſpread itſelf over her countenance, and dilated a ſet of features which, in their natural ſtate of contraction, depicted all the cramp of a narrow mind. She ſaw, and ſeeing rejoiced, that the pains ſhe had juſt beſtowed on her decorations, had gained her at leaſt attention; and indeed it muſt have been a ſtill more drowſy mortal than even Lambert Byram, who would have ſuffered Miſs Rufford, arrayed in all the contraſts of colours, and all the eccentricities of whim and taudrineſs, to paſs unregarded.

The company were ſeated at ſupper: Lambert had recovered his twiſting features from an expreſſion they were not much accuſtomed to; Mrs. Rufford had ſlopped ſome fricaſee into his plate, by way of helping him. Mr. Rufford had named his liquors; and Miſs Rufford had ſmirked and fidgetted, as long as her appetite would permit her to neglect her favourite

meal of ſupper, when Lambert, who had in vain endeavoured to comprehend ſome parts of her dreſs, finding his curioſity irreſiſtible, indulged in a topographical ſurvey of her figure, and by this ſeemingly inevitable return of his eyes to their former poſition, at the ſame moment convinced the young lady that ſhe had conquered, and her father that his plan muſt ſucceed. —Lambert, fearing to truſt himſelf with too much contemplation, recalled his thoughts, by inviting Mrs. Rufford to take a glaſs of wine—ſhe declining it, her huſband put in a ſeaſonable word for his Sally, by offering her as a ſubſtitute for her mamma; and Sally, with giggle in the extremities of her puckered mouth, and goggle in her extended eyes, ſeized the opportunity of naming Mr. Byram, and pouring on him the whole force of her features.

No idea ever diſturbed the adventurous Sarah, that Byram, whoſe ſituation ſhe was not ignorant of, and whoſe very outline declared

declared him to have lived not only in London, but in what is called *the world*, muſt, with eyes not at all favourable to her pretenſions, ſee her aukward endeavour to be *genteel*. That he muſt of neceſſity be accuſtomed to whatever can be obtained in a metropolis towards poliſhing the female form and manners, and therefore might draw compariſons not at all to her advantage, was a ſentiment of diffidence that never entered that cavity of her head, which perhaps Nature forgot to furniſh with brains. She had unqueſtionably, and ſhe was convinced irrevocably, fixed his attention: love, or at leaſt the profeſſion of it, followed of courſe: no difficulty obſtructed the rapid ſuggeſtion of her thoughts—ſhe was wooed—ſhe was won—ſhe was Mrs. Byram—ſhe ſaw herſelf in that zenith of happineſs ſhe had once ſeen and ever ſighed for, *London, and a coach.*

Superfluous removes crowned the nauſeous plenty of a meal, where ſweets obliterated pungency, and acids effervеſced with alka-

alkalines. Sarah, the all-accompliſhed Sarah! whoſe moments ſince the entrance of Byram had been devoted but to one, and that a very different object, was extolled with every heap her father piled on his plate, for her exquiſite adroitneſs in the culinary art. Horace's art of poetry furniſhed his torturing imagination with precepts that corroborated her claims to praiſe—here was *ſeaſoning*; here was *reliſh*; here was the *utile* with the *dulce*—here were all the ingredients of the Epic, the Sapphic—here was the *adonicus* of a latent flavour, which reſted on the palate—here were—O here were all the nonſenſe and pedantry that an univerſity education, beſtowed on folly, uſually brings forth to entertain *friends*; and all the frothy ebullition of that ſpecies of hilarity which tends to deject the ſpirits of all but the performers.

Byram, who had been uſed to ſuperior ſociety, and whoſe natural talents were ſuch as even exceſſive indolence could not ſpoil,

was

was ſoon weary of theſe attempts to amuſe him, and ſoon aware of the drift of Mr. Rufford's vivacity, and Miſs Rufford's glances. He knew his own powers of pleaſing; but there was nothing to encourage him even to make himſelf merry at the expence of beings ſo contemptible; and he turned from the vapid and the pert to the inſipid, hoping to find in Mrs. Rufford's no-pretenſions, ſome relief from volatile nonſenſe; but her fair complexion and pearl-coloured eyes, her receding mouth, and ſcarcely-dividing lips, though they beſpoke the extreme of content, ſoon chilled him, when he found them truly the index of a mind incapable of any other conceptions, than thoſe of the comforts in which ſhe nurſed herſelf. His thoughts, now rather impelled than obſtructed, wandered to his father; and he would have made an excuſe of the neceſſity of riſing early to have broke away; but the clamorous urgency with which the old gentleman and his daughter beſought him to take his breakfaſt

breakfaſt with them, would not permit it, even had it not been enforced by the *energies* of the lady of the houſe herſelf, who, having taſted the old beer, the Trinity audit, two or three times at ſupper, and concluded her repaſt with a few brandy cherries, and mixed *a little weak* punch for herſelf, now with tears, but not of ſorrow, in her eyes, hoped Mr. Byram would not be ſo unkind as to leave their cottage ſo ſoon as the next day, when ſhe flattered herſelf ſhe could ſhew him a few of the beauties of the neighbourhood, at a little ſnug dance they were invited to.—This was going farther than papa and Sarah deſigned; but the one twitched Mrs. Rufford by the ſleeve; and the other ſcreamed in a higher tone of leſs cordiality to no purpoſe; for Byram had heard of the dance; and though it was an exerciſe his apathy ſeldom allowed him to join in, he, being ignorant of the country, had ſome curioſity to ſee, whether Miſs Rufford was only *one of many*, or an *unique*.

CHAP. II.

LAMBERT took his leave for the night, however, undetermined; and on entering his chamber, felt all his thoughts concentered in himself and the present moment; for the chill of a best room met him; and a fire, which appeared to have been kindled within the last five minutes, seemed inadequate to warming the spacious gloomy apartment.—Not caring to give trouble, he undressed, and went to bed, and was just so far dismissing Miss Rufford's taudry figure from his eyes, as to close them in a doze, when he found the powerful attraction of his own warmth in the docility with which all the linen round him followed him as he stirred. It was now too dangerous a situation to remain in: he was forced to rise; and finding nothing that he could trust,

truſt, as leſs noxious, to paſs the night in, he unwillingly rang his bell.—The old ſervant and the cherry-cheeked girl ſtripped the bed; but the evil was in the bed itſelf: the old woman muttered ſomething about Miſs's orders, and her having told Miſs it would be ſo; but that Miſs liked to have her own way, and choſe the gentleman ſhould have the beſt room; and then the nymphs departed, promiſing to deviſe ſome means for the ſhivering gentleman's more comfortable lodging.

In a few minutes he received a requeſt from this veteran Abigail to follow her, where he might be ſure of a well-aired room and bed; and he was ſhewn into a very neat, ſmall chamber, furniſhed very ordinarily, but ſo exquiſitely nice, and ſo decorated with little efforts of taſte, that he almoſt forgot his fatigue and vexation, while, with the candle in his hand, he examined ſome very moderate attempts at drawing, ſome paper cuttings, and ſome miniature

miniature profiles of the family, with which one ſide of the apartment was almoſt covered. Wondering whither he had got, and curious to know whoſe apartment it was, he was ſoon convinced, by the furniture of a ſmall dreſſing table, that he had ejected ſome female of the family.

He then ſurveyed, with admiration, ſome very delicate baſkets and boxes of fillagree, and other elegant manufactures; and ſuppoſing he muſt be in Miſs Rufford's apartment, he took the precaution which her encouraging manner rendered not abſurd, to undraw the bed curtains, that he might be ſure he had the room to himſelf. Finding no one to witneſs his inquiſitiveneſs, he proceeded to open ſome books that lay on the window.—They were ſuch as beſpoke good taſte; and at leaſt a wiſh to be acquainted with foreign languages; for in a Metaſtaſio he found an incomplete tranſlation of one of the moſt pathetic ſcenes; in a volume of Pere Bourdaloüe, he found a

page

page rendered into Engliſh, and again into the original language; and in a Lilly's Grammar, he found a tranſcript of a noun, incorrectly declined.

The faults of Byram's mind included none of the hoſtile tribe. He began to amend his opinion of Miſs Rufford: he put the faireſt conſtruction on endeavours that implied a good diſpoſition of mind: he gave her credit for having in the courſe of the preceding evening made no pedantic diſplay of her accompliſhments; but yet he felt a difficulty in reconciling the elaborate external of this lady with purſuits that muſt occupy more of the mind than *fine miſſes* can ſpare from themſelves: a ſarcaſtic ſmile might perhaps glance over his countenance, when he conceived he ſaw in the lady's books an excuſe for his damp chamber; but he conſidered that ſhe had made all poſſible atonement; and he retired to reſt in great good humour with her head, if not with its

its accoutrements; and his benevolence towards her was conſiderably augmented, by his finding when he lay down that he had had a recent predeceſſor in his lodging, for the bed was not yet cold. He was now as much vexed as ever in his life by the apprehenſion that her politeneſs had made her riſe to accommodate him, yet he thought it hardly poſſible, as he had taken leave of her in the parlour—yet he decided that it muſt be Miſs Rufford, and he accordingly went to ſleep with Miſs Rufford's virtues and endowments in his head.

He roſe early in the morning with a very proper reſolution to proceed to Bath, as ſoon as he could get away; and with ſome difficulty ſteered his way to the lower part of the houſe; when by turning wrong he found himſelf, not in the room he had ſpent the former evening in, but in a paſſage which was cloſed by a glaſs door with a ſcanty curtain drawn before it. Here

his

his attention was caught by a few imperfect ſounds from a feeble muſical inſtrument; and, going forward, he, unobſerved, perceived a female in a morning dreſs, ſitting at an old ſpinnet, betraying evidently the want of a teacher, and a vehement but deſpairing earneſtneſs to accompliſh what ſhe was attempting: fearful of being ſeen, he ſtaid only long enough to ſuppoſe this perſonage Miſs Rufford, whoſe perſevering ſpirit was to be inferred from the brick-floor of the apartment, which appeared to have no fire place, and from the extreme cold of the morning.

At length he found the parlour, and having amuſed himſelf with the literary furniture of the ſide-board till ten o'clock, he was joined, firſt by Miſs Rufford, in whoſe favour Cupid had ſo violently ſhaken his heart. She could ſcarcely forbear telling him how diligent ſhe had been to gain the firſt tête-á-tête with him—ſhe appeared to him to have changed her dreſs ſince

ſince he ſaw her in the cold hall, and was now fidgetting and friſking in all the buſtle of buttons too ſtubborn to meet button holes, and of a dreſs too ſtiff to give any idea of drapery.

Diſguſted with the nonſenſe of her manners, Lambert returned to his firſt ideas of her; but yet curious to know if it was really herſelf whom he had ſo unſeaſonably diſplaced at midnight, he politely expreſſed his concern; and the reception it met with confirmed his opinion. She acquitted herſelf of the imputation of neglect, by transferring the blame of the reeking bed on *Joan*, by whom he underſtood the maid ſervant, who had excuſed herſelf by the ſame charitable method. He now paſſed ſome compliments on the imagined attainments of his companion, which ſhe did not ſeem at firſt to comprehend—he ſuppoſed this the diſguiſe of modeſty; for on more explicitly adverting to her knowledge of languages, ſhe confeſſed that at boarding ſchool

ſchool ſhe had been *learned to talk French.* Lambert forbore to enquire farther, and was again at a loſs to reconcile Miſs Rufford and herſelf.

The breakfaſt apparatus now entered: Mr. Rufford followed with an apology for the abſence of his lady, who he gave his gueſt to underſtand could no otherwiſe get through the fatigues of the day than by conſuming one half of it in ſleep. Miſs Rufford, to whom Byram ſuppoſed he was to be beholden for the donation of his breakfaſt, ſat friſking and giggling as uſual. He expected her to riſe and begin the neceſſary proceſs; but he waited in vain: he then, to quicken the family-diligence, aſked how he ſhould procure a chaiſe from Reading, as he wiſhed to be gone immediately after breakfaſt. This was duly oppoſed; but one point ſeemed gained by the attempt; for Miſs Rufford rang the bell, and in a ſtyle of command, ordered *Joan* to come in and make the tea.

The

The deuce is in it! thought Byram. What—Is it the Berkſhire faſhion to have the maid in to portion out a breakfaſt? he did not much like the idea—it produced another reſolution to be gone quickly; and he prepared to eat his meal in dudgeon.

Joan inſtantly made her appearance, to the utter diſtraction of all Lambert's former prejudices and ideas. Inſtead of the chambermaid he had expected, he ſaw a young woman who ſeemed not to have attained her nineteenth year, and whom he inſtantly recognized as the anxious practitioner on the ſpinnet. Every attribute of good ſenſe, good nature, induſtry, &c. &c. which he had ſo laviſhly given to Miſs Rufford, he now withdrew to beſtow them, where indeed they more properly belonged, and where they were rendered ſtill more attractive by external recommendations which at once roufed to animation all his dormant faculties. He was ſtill, however, puzzled—there was

 ſomething

ſomething incongruous in the appearance of *Joan*, and the manner in which ſhe was conſidered by the family. She was called, ſhe was blamed, like a ſervant--ſhe looked like a being infinitely ſuperior to the reſt of the houſhold.

No introduction announced Byram and herſelf to each other: ſteady gravity, and ſomething akin to diffident reſerve, were in her countenance; but ſhe acquitted herſelf with eaſe and politeneſs; and though ſhe was allowed no part in the converſation, and Miſs Rufford pertly anſwered for her, whenever he addreſſed her, her mode of attention indicated as ſtrongly a refined underſtanding, as her patient toleration of evident contempt did an humble temper.

The petty arts of the ill deſigning generally defeat their own purpoſes; and may Heaven ever continue this comfortable reflection to thoſe unfortunately ſubject to them!

them! In the tyrannical diſpoſition to blame, which the old gentleman took no pains to diſguiſe; and in the inceſſant endeavours of his daughter to cruſh humility, Lambert ſaw the malignity of their natures, and thence inferred the merit of their victim. He imagined her ſuch as ſhe truly was, helpleſs, friendleſs, dependent, amiable. Bath and his father again vaniſhed into air; and if he thought on any thing but the object before him, it was on the beſt means to be deviſed for prolonging his ſtay at Milham.

The exterior of the depreſſed *Joan* was an obſtacle to Miſs Rufford's plans, that even her ſhallow capacity could duly judge of. Her glaſs could reflect, blindly partial as ſhe was to her own perſon, no ſuch form as that of the ill-treated family dependent. A diſpoſition to grow fat, which her appetite and her indolence encouraged, had entirely ruined all her pretenſions to *genteelneſs*, which in the early

part of her life, ſhe had conſtrued as ſynonymous with length and lankneſs. Now, indeed, her opinion had a little varied; but a rude mantua-maker had ſo often excuſed her miſtakes in her buſineſs, by pleading to Miſs Rufford that ſhe grew *ſtouter* every year, that ſhe could not conceal from herſelf ſome latent fear that ſhe might be rather clumſy. She had ſtudied her features with all the pertinacity of ſelf-prejudice—ſhe ſaw their want of ſymmetry; but ſhe perſuaded herſelf ſhe had a certain agreeable ſmartneſs in her countenance which a due attention to dreſs would ſet forward in the claſs of prettineſs. She therefore dreſſed up to this idea; and the real character of her viſage being heavy and louring, ſhe was ever miſtaken in her ſmirks and her faſhions.

The contraſt with which *Joan* tormented her, conſiſted in a perſon very far removed from any of Miſs Rufford's conceptions of beauty; but which, for what reaſon ſhe never

never could guefs, was admired by all, and attractive even to herfelf: it had no claim to the praife of fkeleton-proportions; it boafted none of the majefty of height, or the languor of fickneſs; it indicated youth and a degree of health, though far from robuſt, yet uninjured by indolence or folly.

Miſs Rufford's ſagacity ſoon perceived the alienation of Lambert's eyes. She, however, derived comparative comfort from the ſmall portion of *captivation* which her competitor had thought proper to diſplay; for *Joan's* hair, and a great part of the beauty of her face, were hid by a large morning cap, which in Lambert's opinion atoned for its privations by its exceſſive neatneſs: her whole dreſs expreſſed by its cleanlineſs, the purity of her mind and her juſt idea of propriety, while Miſs Rufford's hair *en papillottes*, was exhibiting from the ambuſh of a ſcanty cap, crowned with a dreſs bonnet *of many colours*.

Fooliſhly angry, not with the contraſt ſhe herſelf formed, but that which ſhe aſcribed to her deſpiſed rival, her humour changed; and diſcontent got the better of the graces, the ſmiles, and the loves. She no longer preſſed Mr. Byram's ſtay: ſhe rated Joan with all the provocation of taunting language: ſhe pouted at her father when he attempted to be gay: ſhe ſcouled at Lambert; and, but for the imprudence of the meaſure, could have quitted the field of battle in diſguſt.

CHAP. III.

THE breakfaſt being concluded, Miſs Rufford, driving Joan before her, left the room; and no reaſonable cauſe of diſpleaſure offering itſelf, ſhe began to ſcold her for the pains ſhe had taken to allure Mr. Byram by her dreſs and deportment. She was aſked what buſineſs ſhe had to put on a clean cap and gown. The anſwer that the one ſhe had worn three days, and the other a fortnight, was no ſatisfaction: her *taking* airs were then complained of—there was no better defence againſt this charge; for ſhe was told that ſeeming *humbleneſs* and *ſimpleneſs* were her arts. Joan burſt into tears, and flew to her daily drudgery, that ſhe might forget in her duties for the family, the injuries ſhe had received from them.

In the mean time, Lambert attempted to learn from Mr. Rufford the ſituation of this charming young woman, and would have proceeded to ſpeak his ſentiments, had he not been diſcouraged by the frigid anſwers his enquiries met with. 'She is, Sir,' ſaid the preacher of fraternal love and all the charities of life, 'ſhe is the daughter of a ſcoundrel, with whom, to my misfortune, I got acquainted at St. John's: he was then the heir to a very conſiderable patrimony; and I hoped it would have been in his power to have done ſomething for me, or elſe I ſhould not have courted his acquaintance. He married imprudently, and his father diſinherited him. I never ſaw him after that; for I ſaw he was not in a way to do himſelf or any body any good. He died ſoon afterwards of a broken heart for the loſs of his wife, and had the aſſurance to leave me his child to maintain.'

'And do you not,' ſaid Byram, after a pauſe of real humanity, 'do not you, Sir, maintain

maintain this child with love and joy? Could any other friend have left you ſo valuable a bequeſt? O what rapture to ſave, to protect, to cheriſh, this laſt bloſſom of a froſt-nipt plant!'

'Heyday! young gentleman,' returned Mr. Rufford, with a ſtill more petrifying aſpect, and alarmed for his dear Sarah's ſucceſs, which he had been wiſe enough to aſſure her was certain; 'why, I hope you are not in love with this charity-miſs.'

Byram had prudence enough to perceive that hypocriſy was neceſſary: he pretended to advert only to the ſituation of her father; and a few ſmooth words laid reverend ſagacity aſleep.

Mr. Rufford then, as if willing to make ſure of his meaning, plainly propoſed to him *a family alliance*, and begged him when he arrived at Bath, to mention to his father, Sir Clifford Byram, his wiſh that the long-

ſtanding intimacy between them might be cemented by a marriage.—Aſtoniſhment, and an averſion to being rude, ſealed the young man's lips, while the zealous parent, encouraged and exulting, proceeded to deſcant on Sally's good qualities, amongſt which he enumerated making a ſhirt and a pudding.

It has been objected to an early acquaintance with the world, that it tends to conceit and pertneſs. It has undoubtedly produced, in many inſtances, thoſe unpleaſant fruits; but it would be error to infer from thence the ſecurity of a ſecluſion from ſociety, while the mind, its habits and pretenſions are forming. To have nothing ſuperior to ourſelves to compare our attainments with, is evidently dangerous to preſumptuous diſpoſitions, by producing ſelf-complacency; and to tempers eaſily diſcouraged no leſs ſo, as productive of romantic ideas of the excellence of others, and conſequently of our own particular

ticular deficiencies.—It may be truly anſwered, that good ſenſe will, even in ſolitude, go far towards forming a correct eſtimate of our progreſs—but alas! good ſenſe is not the characteriſtic feature of every mind that needs its guidance; at leaſt, it was no part of the compoſition of Mr. Rufford, or his daughter: he had never mixed farther in the world than was neceſſary to his making his way through it; and ſhe, ſatisfied with doating approbation, neither ſaw nor heeded excellence, unleſs her envy ſtumbled on it. It was to this blind ignorance of all compariſon, that the old gentleman was indebted for the courage neceſſary to making ſo bold a propoſition to a young man, who wanted nearly a year of being of age, and whoſe expectations from his father were equal to the elegant rank the family maintained, as that of an union with a woman, his inferior in every thing but age. At any other time, Lambert Byram would have ſuffered contemptuous ſilence to indicate

his refuſal; but *Joan*, ſweet *Joan!* was in his thoughts; and he anſwered temperately, though not encouragingly, that matrimony was a ſubject he had not yet turned his thoughts to.—Mr. Rufford adviſed him by all means to think on it—he talked of Sally's three thouſand pounds, and jeſuitically hinted at his farther intentions for her.—Byram interrupted the converſation, by again requeſting, though with abated urgency, that a chaiſe might be procured for him; but his hoſt, inferring like his daughter, that whoever liſtened muſt be captivated, was more earneſt than before, and furniſhed Lambert with a very decent pretext for deferring his journey. Matters being thus adjuſted for his remaining where he was, till the next day, he was left alone, while Mr. Rufford went to inform the ladies of his condeſcenſion. He was at no loſs to employ this half hour: for the firſt time, in his remembrance, he felt buſy, and reſolute to make the moſt of the paſſing day:

—he

—he could form no plan till he heard how he was to ſpend it, and this he learnt of Mr. Rufford at his return: he found the family dined at two, till which hour the ladies, or at leaſt Miſs Rufford, intended herſelf the pleaſure of working in the parlour.

Mr. Rufford excuſed himſelf for thus leaving him to his family, by pleading a burying and other parochial duty; but Byram's wits were ſet to an edge; he ſaw the contrivance, and determined to avail himſelf of it to the beſt of his power. He profeſſed himſelf perfectly ſatisfied with the morning ſcheme, but not ſo with that for the evening, when Mr. Rufford promiſed to introduce him to his club at the White-Hart. — The renovated Cymon, grown bold through neceſſity, intimated his having heard of a ball in the neighbourhood, and begged he might, if not an improper addition, be of the ladies' party. To this Mr. Rufford, as if the

matter

matter had been previouſly ſettled in conclave, objected, by ſaying he had only a chaiſe which would take no more than *the ladies* and *Joan*, about whoſe being preſent at the dance, he ſaid, a great rout was made by the lady who gave it.—This was ſufficient information for the novice in love: he propoſed to walk over to Reading to order a chaiſe, not without hope that he might contrive to obtain the contemned Joan, either for his companion or his partner. His reſolution was proof againſt all ſtudied evaſions; he removed every difficulty as it occurred, and Miſs Rufford preſently after entered the parlour, and ſat down as ſoon as her father withdrew, purpoſely to be made love to.

Her work was the contrivance of decorations for the evening—pink was ſewed upon green; and blue was held up to it for choice of effect—all the hoſtile materials of a country milliner's ſhop, were brought in turns into contact, with an infanity of genius, perhaps increaſed by the circumſtances

ſtances of the hour.—The newſpaper had come in; and Lambert was glancing his eye over it, civilly reading now and then a paragraph, but more intent on his hope that Joan would join them; but ſhe not appearing, and Miſs Rufford ſeeming impatient of the newſpaper, he ventured to aſk if he could not at the ſame time amuſe her and her fair companion, by a book.

'Companion? ſir,' repeated the ſpinſter, in the deepeſt tones her organs could utter;—'I don't know who you may mean by *companion:* I keep no *companion.* If you mean Joan, I would have you underſtand that young perſon to be a dependent on our family, and no companion of mine. Companion indeed!—I am never ſo badly off for company, as to ſit with my own ſervant.—Miſs Joan pleaſes to give herſelf a great deal too many airs, that I think would better become her to go without them—She is only a great deal too much indulged—ſhe wants to be a fine accompliſhed

pliſhed lady, as if ſhe had a boarding-ſchool education; but I ſhall put a ſtop to it preſently—I don't ſee what ſuch girls have to do, but to work at their needle, and mind the family that they eat the bread of.' All this and much more was uttered with a convulſive agitation that almoſt jerked the lady's head from her ſhoulders, while the malignant expreſſion of her features, the tears that ſtood ſtarting in her eyes, and the impediment to her utterance, which founded in her throat, ſhewed how formidable a rival, notwithſtanding all her contempt, ſhe thought her dependent.

Lambert was determined to take no notice of her expreſſions or her ill humour; but all he heard and ſaw ſtimulated him to be expeditious. He again civilly offered to read, and begged Miſs Rufford to chuſe the author and the ſubject. In choaking ſilence, ſhe reached her work baſket, and drew forth Congreve's

greve's Love for Love!!!—Byram could not but admire her taſte and the *delicacy* of her ideas—he entered on his taſk, not a little delighted with the opportunity ſhe gave him of puniſhing her for her ill nature—he read, without ſkipping, and gave due emphaſis, by tone, eyes, and features, to all the ſtrong expreſſions of the author; —but his revenge was inane. Miſs Rufford joined his laugh, and forgot the diſturbance of her temper in the wit of the performance—ſhe commended as *nature*, all that moſt of her ſex would have been deaf to, and completed Lambert's deteſtation of her, by ſhewing, that even common decency was as much a ſtranger to her vacuum of underſtanding as common good nature—he could not, as he ſhut the book, and ſhe ogled him, as if expecting him now to play the lover whoſe part he had read, forbear ironically complimenting her on her taſte; and declaring ſhe was the only lady of his acquaintance to whom he would have read Love for Love.

She

She took the firſt part of the declaration for an expreſſion of preference, and the laſt for a figurative mode of divulging his paſſion! and Miſs Rufford would have grown too formidable, had not the knives and forks ſounded a retreat.——Byram juſt then recollected that he was not as neat as he uſually ſat down to table; but Miſs Rufford urged him to poſtpone dreſſing, as ſhe ſhould, till after dinner—he had his intended walk to Reading in his head, and therefore acquieſced. Preſently appeared the old gentleman, juſt returned from his pious labors, and his dame, who now firſt made her *entrée* amongſt her family. They ſat down to table: to Byram's great mortification Joan was ſtill abſent, and he began to grow weary of the civility he thought it prudent to adopt. The leg of mutton was about to depart, when Mrs. Rufford, as if juſt waking, obſerved that Joan would come ſoon, and haggled a ſlice out for her, againſt her arrival: it was chilled on the plate

plate when the ill-treated girl came in: without the leaſt deficiency of good breeding or chearfulneſs, ſhe prepared to take her ſeat, but remained ſtanding till ſhe had heard from Mr. Rufford a very ſcientific reprehenſion of the caper ſauce—ſhe mildly promiſed to amend the error in future. A momentary elevation of her hands and eyes beſpoke her pious thankfulneſs, and in peace and humility ſhe ate her untempting allowance—her trembling hands all the while proclaiming that it was ſome ſervile drudgery which had detained her from the table.

During the meal, which he hoped fully occupied the attention of the moſt vigilant of the company, Byram repeated his endeavours to engage Joan in converſation; but Miſs Rufford was a Cerberus no ſop could quiet, and he was obliged to give up the point. The two younger ladies quitted the table very quickly. The elder one, ſeeming totally inert, remained, and

their

their gueſt moved to begin his walk; but this trouble Mr. Rufford had kindly ſaved him, by beſpeaking the chaiſe when he went to read the papers at Reading.

When Byram went to dreſs, he was conducted to the room he had evacuated the night before, and when he was ready to make his appearance, he in his way to the parlour was completely mortified by ſeeing in one of the chambers, Joan in her morning dreſs very buſily aſſiſting Miſs Rufford.—He now deſpaired of any opportunity of introducing himſelf to her, and was almoſt tempted to employ the chaiſe beſpoke for him, for the better purpoſe of viſiting his father: he was however unwilling to give up his laſt chance; but not a hope remained when, at five o'clock, Joan entered *en deſhabille*, to make Mr. Rufford's tea, and was detained, as if on purpoſe, by his ſlopping and prating, till it was within twenty minutes of ſix, when he had been told they were to de-

part;

part; yet ſhe ſhewed no impatience. Made obſtinate and imprudent by the cruelty he witneſſed, he reſolved in his own mind not to go, if ſhe was left behind; and little farther was wanting to provoke him to ſpeak too freely.

But matters were not ſo untoward in reality, as they had been in aſpect.—In a few minutes, and while Mrs. Rufford and her daughter were abſent to give themſelves the laſt finiſh, Joan returned, and by her improved appearance aſcertained his promiſed felicity.—He could not forbear expreſſing his joy and ſurprize. She took no notice of the former, but to his wonder at her celerity, ſhe replied without any embarraſſment, that being accuſtomed to be called while ſhe was dreſſing, and ſtudying chiefly in her decorations œconomy of time as well as of expence, ſhe was ſeldom long at her toilet. 'I have only to comb my hair and change a coloured dreſs

dreſs for a white one, and then I am,' ſaid ſhe, 'as fine as my ſituation ever requires.'

Byram could not forbear replying, though he began to feel awed by his ſituation.—'No ſolicitude could be ſo ſucceſsful, madam, as your ſtyle of dreſs;' and indeed Byram's taſte was not inaccurate; for a countenance, adorned with ſome of Nature's beſt features, and enlightened by all the amiable and ingenuous expreſſions that the mind could give it, needed no other ornament than her profuſion of light brown hair, which curling negligently over her forehead, gave a ſhade to her eyes, and hung in a thouſand ringlets on her ſhoulders, confined only by a ſimple ornament to keep its exuberance within more convenient bounds. —Joan could not follow the faſhion of the world with that accuracy which depends on money—Miſs Rufford had diſguſted her with taudry attempts—ſhe therefore borrowed her ideas from grace; and correcting them by her own good ſenſe, though

though ſhe was never violently faſhionable, ſhe always pleaſed, and maintained a ſuperiority of appearance that procured her the admiration and diſtinction of all the men, and the conſequent hatred of her own ſex.

Provoked with himſelf for loſing, through timidity, the beſt opportunity he could have hoped for of beſpeaking her attention, Byram made an effort to be eloquent; but his purpoſe was not very clear, though it might be gueſſed at by his aukwardneſs, when the ladies ruſtled into the room—he curſed their intruſion, not willing to blame his own delay; and they prepared to depart.

CHAP. IV.

LAMBERT'S good humour was not at all improved, by his finding it, as he might have expected, a ſettled matter that he ſhould eſcort Miſs Rufford. A little cooled in his judgment by diſappointment, he foreſaw that ſhe would oblige him to dance with her; and as the cuſtom of changing partners was not then prevalent, he ſaw neither hope nor reſource. Emergency gave him the promptitude opportunity could not afford him; and as he offered his aſſiſtance to Mrs. Rufford and Joan in getting into their chaiſe, he whiſpered a very earneſt petition, that ſhe would reſerve herſelf to dance with him;—ſhe made no reply; but in ſomewhat better hopes from having made the attempt, he joined Miſs Rufford,

Rufford, and very decently did the honors of the winds and the windows.

The diſtance was about four miles; and the forty minutes it took up, were diligently employed by Miſs Rufford to ſecure her ſubjugation of her companion, before his allegiance ſhould be put to any teſt.—She firſt affected the ſentimental, and began admiring the ſtillneſs of the evening—then a philoſophy of mind, that made her look down with contempt on the frivolous amuſement of which ſhe was going to partake; but Lambert perverſely replying to her nonſenſe, that he thought a November evening in the country dreary, and that he loved dancing, her opinions veered about; and ſhe talked of the charms of *Lunnun*, and the felicities of chearful amuſements, giving him now and then a hint that—ſtrange to tell! ſhe was, on this occaſion, unprovided with a partner, and adding, with malice not to be diſſembled, when ſhe ſaw him torpid to

the ſuggeſtion, that ſhe admired Joan's courage in going to balls, when ſhe had never been at boarding ſchool, nor learnt to dance.

" And pray, Madam," replied Lambert, determined at all riſques to torment her, " who is this fame Joan that ſeems to have ſo much myſtery attached to her ſituation? your family really make me curious to have her hiſtory—pray what is her name?"

" Why, *Joan*, Sir," anſwered Miſs Rufford, in a deep key of ſmothered paſſion—" What is it you want to know about Joan?"

Lambert was awed; and in the pauſe of his fears her paſſion mounted, and got the aſcendancy of all her art.—" You ſeem, Sir," ſaid ſhe, in all the agitation of rage, " to be much readier to take notice of the houſe dependents, than of the genteel part of the family—What, I ſuppoſe you are

are one of the troop that come down into the country, to get into genteel families, and ſeduce the maid ſervants, and then leave them and their brats a burden on the pariſh; but, Sir, my papa is a *juſ-pece*, and a magiſtrate; and he never ſuffers ſuch things. I think it would be much unbecominger in you not to *demean* yourſelf ſo low as to pay all your reſpects to people that has not, as you may ſay, almoſt another gown to their backs, and is dependent on genteel families."

" My dear Madam," replied Lambert, with all the gentle hypocriſy of irony, " you entirely miſtake me—I aſſure you, I am not one of the genteel-families'-maid-ſervants'-ſeducing troop; nor would I do ſo *ungenteel* a thing as to leave any of my brats a burden on the pariſh.—I never *unbecome* myſelf ſo far as to *demean* myſelf to low people; but you know, my dear Madam, if thoſe whom we dare not look up to, yet cannot forbear thinking towards,

will not condeſcend to give us any encouragement, a poor young fellow's ſpirit is broken; and he can only hang himſelf, or do worſe."

So fine an oration from an orator ſo charming, entirely overſet ſweet Sarah's dainty underſtanding:—ſhe had been on the brink of crying with paſſion; and though ſhe could repreſs her tears, ſhe could not forbear ſome ſobs, while ſhe anſwered, "I am ſure, Mr. Byram, I never dreamt of being haughty—I thought you might be like Mr. Sanderſon, who came down laſt ſummer, and while I was waiting for him to do the genteel thing, and make me a handſome offer and ſettlements, &c. &c. and ſo forth ——"

From the preſent ſtate of the lady's ſpirits, Lambert now hoped ſomething more than commonly fooliſh was coming—her ſobs increaſing, he ſoothed her into utterance by a few ſugared words; and rubbing her

her eyes with the back of her broad hand, entirely forgetful of her clean white gloves, ſhe proceeded—" Why, Sir, I muſt tell you how it was, for you know when people thinks of coming together, there don't ought, as I ſay, to be any reſerves. Mr. Sanderſon was a very genteel young man, and came down among us laſt ſummer—he was a very genteel young man indeed, and travelled the country, you ſee like a rider, as they call it, but in a very genteel way; for he never carried any thing but his own little portmanteau, which I really don't think as it took more room than a lump of butter—I never ſee ſuch a little totty thing as Mr. Sanderſon's portmanteau!—O how I uſed to admire that there dear little portmanteau!"

" Well, my dear Madam," interpoſed Byram, leaving the dear little portmanteau to take care of itſelf, " let us proceed, if you pleaſe, with its owner."

" Lord a mercy !" cried Miſs, " I had no thoughts ever of proceeding againſt Mr. Sanderſon; but however, if you adviſe it, I will tell you the whole ſtory to an end—Ah ! I recollect as you are in the law, and the Temple; ſo I ſuppoſe you know what is law."

The portmanteau and the law were almoſt too much; and Lambert, beſtowing a curſe on her wits, begged her to *gò on* with her narrative, for had he ſaid *continue it*, he feared the phraſe might have proved too embarraſſing in its meaning.

" Well, Sir," reſumed Miſs Rufford, " Mr. Sanderſon was the only ſon and heir of a gentleman of my papa's acquaintance —I believe they had a ſeat in one of the foreign counties—I don't recollect which; but I think it was *Sow—ſow—ſouth—South-wark*—yes, I am ſure of it now—you know one can't always recollect one's *jography*—it was the county of Southwark—his friends were

were very rich—his father, he told me himſelf, had twice given his vote for a member of parliament, who came, I aſſure you, with all the *congees* and bows, to aſk it, as if old Mr. Sanderſon had been a prince; and though the parliament-man was in his carriage when he met old Mr. Sanderſon, juſt upon a very high hill in the county of Southwark, that they call St. Margaret's hill—I believe it is a hill that you ſee the ſea from—it is a beautiful place by all account,--yet do you know he would not ſpeak to old Mr. Sanderſon from his coach, but got out, and ſtood all in the dirty ſtreet, in the middle of the carts and coaches, to pay his *devors* to old Mr. Sanderſon."

"Well, but my dear Madam," ſaid Byram, "let me underſtand the ſtory clearly—I thought you ſaid Mr. Sanderſon had come down in a way that made me ſuppoſe him a rider from ſome of the wholeſale dealers in London.

" I don't know what you call a *wholeſale dealer*," replied Miſs; " I know that Mr. Sanderſ—"

" Pardon me, Madam," interrupted Byram, " for preſuming to inform you; but a wholeſale dealer is a man who traffics in commodities, in very large quantities; others who ſell in ſmall quantities, for the immmediate uſe of the conſumer, we call retail dealers."

" Then I am ſure, Sir," ſaid Miſs Sally, perfectly ſatisfied with her companion's endeavour to make her feel ridiculous, " Mr. Sanderſon was not with any of your wholeſale dealers; for he was a very genteel young man, and I dare ſay none of his friends would have ſuffered him to have ſtirred a finger with a large parcel; no, I am ſure his muſt have been a very genteel buſineſs. But, as I was ſaying, down he came, and my papa met with him, as he might do with you, and aſked him to the houſe,

houſe, and ſo I ſaw that very evening, what was his deſign, as you ſee I might do your's; and he ſtaid five or ſix days; and I am ſure I did every thing that was genteel and agreeable; for I ſaw what was at his tongue's end; ſo we walked out in an evening into the wood; and it uſed to be ſo pleaſant to hear the dear little innocent birds ſing, and ſee them fluttering about."

"Well, Madam," interrupted Lambert; "and did not this inviting ſituation, and your uncommon goodneſs produce a declaration on his part?"

"No, Sir," ſhe anſwered, in a tone of mortification, "when I was expecting to hear him ſay what I am ſure he meant; but only an artful huſſy came in the way, and you ſee, he had got hold of my hand; and, you ſee, I did not think it was the thing to draw it away, as we were, you ſee, as you may ſay, on a ſociable footing, one of

our wenches came to call us in to ſupper; ſhe was the forwardeſt, impudenteſt creature I ever ſet eyes on—a great broad face and cherry cheeks, and ſo clumſy—but, however, ſhe is ruined to all intents and purpoſes; I took care of that."

" Proceed with your ſtory, Madam, if you pleaſe," ſaid Byram, who now hoped for ſomething worth attending to; " I long for the cataſtrophe."

" Why, Sir, would you believe it," reſumed the narrating fair one, " Why, you ſee, as that good-for-nothing toad, Bet, interrupted Mr. Sanderſon ſo ill-manneredly juſt when he had, I dare ſay, got up his mind to ſpeak, I thought it would not be amiſs to give him another opportunity, if he had any thing to ſay; for you know, I dare ſay, that baſhful people, *ſpecially* young men, wants ſometimes a great deal of encouragement; ſo as I was coming down ſtairs next morning—I had got up early

early to make myſelf a little decent; I juſt taps a little gentle tap at Mr. Sanderſon's door, as I might do at your's, not meaning any offence: preſently I heard Bet's voice—I am ſure it was Bet's voice, call out, O gimini! there's my miſtreſs! With that I burſt open the door—Gracious me, what's that jolt? Lord, it has quite jumbled my cap—Dear me! I dare ſay I ſhall be quite a figure—O I believe we are at Mrs. Halnaby's.—Well, Sir, Mr. Sanderſon went away directly; and Bet was turned out, as the minx deſerved, without a character."

A few words which followed this compendium of the cataſtrophe did not reach Byram's ear; for, jumping out of the vehicle, he went to aſſiſt Joan and her gouvernante in alighting. Miſs Rufford remaining in the attitude of a cat on the brink of a pond, deſirous to deſcend, but fearful of misfortune. In the mean time, Lambert had repeated his requeſt to Joan, that he might be allowed to dance with

her; and not able to obtain any anſwer, he ſaw her ſafe on the ground, and returned to Miſs Rufford, who would willingly have detained his arm till ſhe had entered the ball-room; but not chuſing to aſſume the character of her devoted knight, he kept behind; and the proceſſion entered in order; but it was to his great aſtoniſhment that he perceived Miſs Rufford now gave way to Joan, and ſuffered her to make her appearance before her.

CHAP. V.

A GENTEEL looking groupe of dancers and ſpectators were aſſembled at Mrs. Halnaby's. The lady of the houſe appeared about the middle age of life; was handſome in her perſon, and elegant in her manners. She noticed politely buſtling Mrs. Rufford, in her beſt crimſon damaſk gown and laced apron, and her ſmart daughter, who chilled in lilac luſtring trimmed with pale blue; but the welcome ſhe gave Joan was different; ſhe claſped her in her arms, and in a voice of the tendereſt affection ſhe cried out, "God bleſs you, my love, I am rejoiced to ſee you; I was fearful you could not be here, for I heard you had a cold. Look! Mrs. Henſedge," ſaid ſhe to a crooked little woman who was ſtanding near her, "look how like her dear

dear mother ſhe grows—you knew her mother.—Reſemble her, my love, in all but her misfortunes, and I ſhall love you for your own ſake and for her's." Joan curtſied, and, with gliſtening eyes, not unobſerved by Lambert, who waited for an introduction, ſhe kiſſed the hand Mrs. Halnaby held her's with. Several young people now came forward with familiar ſalutations and evident joy to meet Joan, who not forgetting in her flattering reception the right of a ſtranger, ſaid in a low voice to Mrs. Halnaby, " I fancy *my ladies* forget to introduce their viſitor to you; it is Mr. Byram, Sir Clifford Byram's ſon: he is going down to his father at Bath. Mr. Rufford met him yeſterday at Reading, and he has been at our houſe ever ſince."

Mrs. Halnaby's good breeding relieved Lambert from an aukward ſituation: ſhe came forward to him, and recognized him as the ſon of a family ſhe had formerly known

known in a diſtant part of the kingdom. The encouragement of her countenance and deportment, excited a hope in him that he might, in the courſe of the evening, get ſome information from her about *Joan*, whoſe name he had not yet heard; but his curioſity was ſooner gratified than he expected; for a trio of ladies coming in, Mrs. Halnaby, who retained her near her, introduced her to them by the aſtoniſhing ſtile and title of *the honourable Miſs Doveridge*, making her ſtill better known, by adding "*my Joanna* of whom you have ſo often heard me ſpeak."

Lambert could not decide whether this alteration in the ſphere Joan ſeemed to move in, affected moſt his hopes or his fears. Joined to the reſerve of her behaviour, he dreaded whatever might give her an advantage; yet he could not but ſee that any ſuperiority muſt render her more acceptable to his family; but in the abſurdity of judgment guided by paſſion,

no

no one circumſtance occupied him ſo fully, as the conduct of the Ruffords in that one particular of vulgariſing Miſs Doveridge's Chriſtian name, into that of *Joan*—Joanna was pretty and uncommon; but *Joan*—O *Joan* was deteſtable. That ſuch ignorant narrow-minded ſouls as the Ruffords ſhould have the dominion over a being ſo nearly of the angelic kind, had reaſonably enraged him; but that they ſhould degrade her name to that of *Joan* was too much for human patience to bear. Why the human mind loves trifles is an inexplicable enigma; but it ſeems to delight in reſting on them ever to the aggravation of acute ſuffering, or we ſhould not ſee, as we do every day, nymphs who have experienced the perfidy of their lovers, moſt wounded at their ſlighting them *in public*. Miſſes on the verge of marriage, when diſappointed by their own coquetry, moſt hurt by the neceſſity of returning to all the gewgaws of courtſhip; wives, whoſe huſbands have plagued them into miſery

by

by attempts to get rich, moſt grieved becauſe little Miſs muſt leave off her dancing, or ſick people moſt uneaſy becauſe they cannot have their chamber unneceſſarily ſcoured.

About forty perſons as miſcellaneous as in a deſcent from the ark, were now aſſembled; the ball-room was opened, and two fiddles, with a tabor and pipe, ſet the heads of the old ladies, and the heels of the young ones in motion. Lambert opened a way for himſelf into a groupe that ſurrounded Miſs Doveridge, and again aſked the favour of her hand.

Mrs. Halnaby at that moment coming up and hearing his requeſt, ſaid, "Nay, my Joanna, do not engage yourſelf: Charles will, I hope, be here preſently, and you know he will expect you to dance with him." "I ſhould be ſorry to diſoblige you or Mr. Halnaby," replied Joanna, turning from Lambert and whiſpering

pering her friend; "but really he has treated me lately with ſuch coolneſs, that I think he will feel obliged to me for diſpoſing of myſelf." "Do as you pleaſe, my love," anſwered Mrs. Halnaby, "in this inſtance, but ſuſpend your opinion of his conduct in all others. I can ſay nothing for him, but that I wiſh he was wiſer.—Dance with Mr. Byram, my dear, if you pleaſe."

The faſhion of the time made minuets a prelude to the more lively meaſures. Lambert felt elated and diſpoſed to exert himſelf when he found it was his lot to ſet the example with Joanna. She acquitted herſelf in a manner that increaſed at once his admiration of her, and his contempt for Miſs Rufford's malevolent detraction; but his ideas were ſoon diſturbed by Joanna's whiſpering to him as he quitted her hands, a requeſt that he would take Miſs Rufford out. Happy to ſhew his devotion in any way, however humiliating,

ating, he approached the ſpinſter, whoſe air, which had been before vulgar and ridiculous, increaſed to complete folly as he approached her. When handed in all the formality of minuet-dancing to the ſtarting place, her head nodded, her eyes reeled to catch obſervation, her crippled elbows bent to the muſic, and propped on heels that erected her on tip-toe, ſhe ſidled and ſhuffled through the figure, with the eaſe of a fettered aſs, and the accuracy of an extempore genius. It was ſo difficult to conform to her movements, and ſo impoſſible to gueſs where ſhe was to be found, that her partner thought only of a decent retreat; but Miſs was determined to make the moſt of an opportunity that perhaps was rare, and ſhe croſſed and croſſed till Byram, out of all patience, led the way to a concluſion, and abruptly quitting her, retired to a ſeat amidſt the confounding titter of all the girls.

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As ſoon as he had a little recovered the ſenſe of his mortification, he made up to Mrs. Halnaby to apologiſe; but the clamour for country dances had begun, and all was forgotten in the proſpect before him.—What then were his feelings when going acroſs the room to ſeek Joanna, he met her coming to take her place at the top of the ſet, led by a very genteel young man whom he had not before ſeen? At the ſame time, Miſs Rufford was friſking as if with the ſame intention, but unprovided with a partner. Provoked and puzzled, Lambert was going to ſeek an explanation by taking Miſs Doveridge's vacant hand, but ſhe withdrew it with a ſmile, ſaying, "I underſtand you are engaged to Miſs Rufford, ſo I have diſpoſed of myſelf." Lambert looked down towards the fiend that haunted his ſteps, who had now paſſed them, and he perceived her tucked up in jigging guiſe, ſtanding in the rank, and marking the time of the country dance tune moſt *forcibly*, if not very

very *correctly*, with her head, her hands, and her feet. He ſaw now that ſhe conſidered him as her right, and had given out that he was engaged to her; but the young ladies of the party had quitted the line to form themſelves again into tittering groups, and expectation ſeemed ſo to hang on what he ſhould do, that he could not ſtand it long: in thorough ill humour he retreated, half reſolved to quit the company and the country, and inſtantly to purſue his journey to Bath; but this would have been to abandon entirely all his hopes, and he heſitated.

In the mean time the dancing began, and poor Miſs Rufford having been *danced by*, and often requeſted to move, not being able to catch the eye of Byram, quitted the field of action with diſdain, and followed him into the adjoining room, calling out, "So, Sir, you won't dance! Well, upon my word, I think"—"Excuſe me, Madam," replied Lambert, deſirous

ſirous at any rate to ſtop her tongue, "I am not in a humour to be talked to."—"Well but, Sir, I thought you and I were to have gone down the dance together—I told you I was not engaged; and here have I kept myſelf."—"Pray, Madam," ſaid Byram, taking up a candle to look at a picture, "excuſe me—I very ſeldom dance—I am not fond of it."——"Perhaps," ſaid Miſs, "you like a little chit-chat better—let me ſhut the door, for them there fiddles make ſuch a noiſe."

Byram would take no notice of ſuch impertinence, but continued looking at the pictures; and his tormentor, who ſeemed diſpoſed to woo him in any way, rather than to loſe him, began to give him what information her knowledge of the pictures furniſhed her with.—"That landſcape," ſaid ſhe, "is a—a—a Hebe—yes, they call it a Hebe—but I don't know why—it was done by a former old *anceſter* of Mrs. Halnaby's—a lady who painted very fine

—ſhe

—ſhe was learnt to paint either by Achilles or Sir Joſhua Reynolds, I dont know which—that there is a Poll Varniſh,—I believe it is called ſo from the name of the gentlewoman that painted it—and that other is the ſtory of a poor gentleman, a Mr. Acton, I think, that was killed by his own hounds.—They ſay Diana ſomebody, I never heard her name, ſet them on to do it, which I think was very ſhameful."

Even Lambert's ill humour could not ſtand ſuch a counterpoiſon as it met with in Miſs Rufford's Ciceronian abilities—his anger changed to contempt and merriment; and he was going to ſhew her how ſincerely he deſpiſed her, when Mrs. Halnaby entering the room in haſte, cried out, "So you two neither chuſe to dance, nor to be ſpectators of the dancing!—I muſt not allow this.—Mr. Byram, you would oblige me much, if you would go down a couple of dances with a lady that cannot get a partner." Glad at any rate

to

to convince Miſs Rufford that her power was not abſolute, and ſuppoſing nothing could be worſe than herſelf, he ſet down the candle and left the neglected fair one in dudgeon. In the door-way Mrs. Halnaby ſtopped, and ſaid, "I beg your pardon,—it is no agreeable partner I have found for you; but it is a lady I am obliged to, and fear to affront." "I ſhall be happy to obey you, Madam," replied Byram, if you will reward me by a quarter of an hour's converſation before I quit your houſe." "I fear it will hardly be in my power," Mrs. Halnaby replied, "this evening; but I will remember your requeſt, and make an opportunity if I can."

He was introduced to his new partner, and his eyes convinced him, that if there was nothing in the creation more wearieſome than Miſs Rufford, there might be ſomething more hideous; for this new object of his attention bore a nearer reſemblance

reſemblance to the Chimæra than to any thing human.—It was Mrs. Henſedge, over whom his pre-occupied eye had but ſlightly glanced, as Mrs. Halnaby ſpoke to her in introducing Joanna—ſhe was about forty years of age, but might, had ſhe kept her own counſel, have paſſed for ſeventy—her figure was contracted into innumerable writhings of deformity—her large lifeleſs eyes warred with each other and with every object that oppoſed itſelf to them, while all the diſproportion poſſible, raged in the lower features of her face.—A perſon ſo unfortunate, might have excited pity, which a well tempered mind might have converted into reſpect; but Mrs. Henſedge could not be contented with what ſhe might have gained—ſhe dreſſed prepoſterouſly, and, as often as it was in her power, exhibited in public the airs and graces ſhe *traveſtied* from the young and the beautiful. Her favourable opinion of herſelf had been recently confirmed by the influence of her money on the ſlender

hopes of Mr. Henſedge, who in the want of caſh and the proſpect of affluence, was blind to the alloy of the golden ſhower, and had compleated her triumph by marrying her.

Recovering from the chill he had felt on firſt approaching her, Lambert took his place with his jocund partner at the bottom of the dance, and had leiſure for ſome minutes to indulge his ſpleen, in beſtowing a few hearty good wiſhes on the ball and its attendants, and on his own folly in delaying his journey. But his fair partner did not long ſuffer him to indulge in gloomy reverie—her tongue was of the alarum claſs; and he heard from her abundance of obſervations on others, not deficient in ſhrewdneſs or ill-nature, but all reverting in their tendency to her own praiſe. Diſguſted as Byram was, he however could not but ſmile, when as a prelude to their ſetting off for an exhibition he felt heartily aſhamed of, Mrs. Henſedge,

ſedge, in a tone of tender apprehenſion, beſought him to be careful in going down the dance, that he took no liberty that could offend Mr. Henſedge, whom ſhe pointed out to him, and deſcribed as being moſt terribly jealous of her. He could ſcarce forbear replying, by repeating, " Of *you*, Madam ?" She added a few delicate hints that her health, and conſequently the family lineage might ſuffer, ſhould her *caro ſpoſo*'s natural jealouſy be rouſed to violence—ſhe charitably ſeemed to infer that an object, ſuch as herſelf, excuſed this weakneſs of his mind, and then ſeizing Byram's hands, and arching her eye-brows to the utmoſt limits of her forehead, ſhe floundered through the couples. Byram heard Mr. Henſedge's name and his jealouſy mentioned to every man ſhe led out or turned hands with ; and the laugh went regularly down with the figure ; but near the bottom Mrs. Henſedge's conceit was affronted by the inattention of one lady to her manœuvres ; ſhe loudly reproved—the

lady did not chuſe to apologize—a few taunts enſued—the goddeſs perhaps ſaw ſhe was laughed at; and violently diſpleaſed, ſhe releaſed Byram, by refuſing to dance any longer.

His amuſement was now to watch Miſs Doveridge—he ſaw her, with infinite grace and ſprightlineſs performing her part—he ſaw her received by all with aſſiduous ſmiles, and all ſeemed ſenſible of the animation of her preſence, except Charles Halnaby whom ſhe danced with. This obſervation and what he had heard between Mrs. Halnaby and Joanna, abated the fears he muſt otherwiſe have indulged; but he now began to queſtion his own ability to make uſe of any opportunity for private converſation with Mrs. Halnaby, ſhould ſhe remember his requeſt and ſhew a diſpoſition to gratify it.

CHAP. VI.

But Fortune threw in Byram's way a temptation too ſudden and too ſtrong to be reſiſted: Mrs. Halnaby came up to him when the company were engaged in the next dance, and ſaid in a manner ſufficiently encouraging, that ſhe was now at leiſure for a few minutes to attend to him if he would follow her into the adjoining drawing-room; here Miſs Rufford had remained, forgotten by all; but ſhe had had the good fortune to faſcinate by her charms and her eloquence, a little curate, a ſtranger in the country; and with him ſhe was practiſing all her ogling and wriggling. To get rid of the impediment this harmonious couple muſt have proved, Mrs. Halnaby urged them to join the dance; the raven-beau ſeemed too obſe-

ſequious to articulate a negative on any occaſion, and not a little proud of the diſtinction he had met with from Miſs Rufford, whom he fancied wealthy; he ſtrutted before her, and put her into thorough good humour by remaining her partner through the evening.

With the intimidating preface, "Well, Sir, what is your pleaſure?" Mrs Halnaby rouſed Lambert from his embarraſſment—he could make neither preface nor apology, and therefore followed the far better method of ſimply telling her that he had by accident become a gueſt in Mr. Rufford's family—that he had found in it an ornament, whoſe worth ſeemed unknown to them, and who was treated by them in a way that at once excited his pity and his curioſity—that from the reception he ſaw given to Miſs Doveridge by Mrs. Halnaby, he feared he muſt, through ignorance, have incurred her diſpleaſure in the few hours they had inhabited the ſame houſe.

houſe, where he found it impoſſible to pay her common civility—he therefore only requeſted Mrs. Halnaby to unveil ſo much of the myſtery of Miſs Doveridge's ſituation, as might enable him to treat her with proper reſpect.

" And is this indeed your *only* motive?" replied Mrs. Halnaby, with an enquiring eye—" I confeſs," replied Lambert, " the contraſt Miſs Doveridge is to the other members of Mr. Rufford's family, ſets her attractions in a very forcible point of view."——" Well, my dear Sir," interrupted Mrs. Halnaby, " I will do as you deſire—I will gratify your curioſity, which is all I can indulge; for, to tell you the truth, I ſhall be mortified to the utmoſt degree, if Joanna is not, in a couple of years, the wife of my ſon—I fancy I need not ſay much to you of her merit; but as I tell you fairly what her proſpect is, and have myſelf not a world of pity for young men's ſudden love, I ſhall not think myſelf

obliged to keep you in ignorance of any other particulars—There is no myſtery attached to Miſs Doveridge's ſituation, but that, I believe, which ariſes from the foibles of thoſe ſhe is forced to obey—her ſituation is humiliating, but it is at preſent irremediable, and muſt end with her minority. She is the orphan of Lord Doveridge, the repreſentative of an ancient, but obſcure and needy family. Her father was a man of uncommon merit, though but weak underſtanding—he fell deſperately in love with the deareſt friend of my childhood: he married her, incenſed her friends, and forfeited all claim to their wealth or kindneſs, by diſappointing their more reaſonable views for her.—They lived on a very narrow income, which want of œconomy daily diminiſhed, and in a few years they both died, worn out, at an early age, with the cares of the world. —They left only this child, then about ſix years of age; and as the ſmall eſtate belonging to the family deſcended in the male line,

line, and there were claims more than equal on every ſpecies of perſonal property that had outlived the wreck of their fortune, this poor girl would have been wholly unprovided for, had not her grandfather, by her mother's ſide, been prevailed on by the entreaties of a friend to extend his bounty towards her: he left her, at his death, one thouſand pounds, which produce her forty pounds a year, an income ſcarcely adequate to her wants.

"Her father had, early in life, been acquainted with Mr. Rufford, and to his care and ſole government he bequeathed her. She never complains; but I have reaſon to believe her life, in ſuch a family, muſt be, as you ſeem to hint, extremely uncomfortable—I have ſometimes attempted to interfere, but to no purpoſe. Mr. Rufford is abſolute; and meaſuring her right to indulgence by her pecuniary expectations, he has brought her up in a way that might have rendered her a diſgrace to

her family; but Joanna can never be otherwiſe than elegant; and I therefore now ſuffer the Ruffords to go on as they pleaſe. I live in this neighbourhood ſolely for the dear girl's ſake: I have given her what little aſſiſtance I am capable of in her education, and have directed her purſuits; but, as I have told you, I deſign her for my ſon; and as, ſhould I be gratified, ſhe will in about two years be releaſed, I am not uneaſy at any deficiency of accompliſhments, which I hope then I may be able to make good; and perhaps it is, on the whole, better, by ſuffering her to ſee what life is without its gilding, to give her a due ſenſe of any bleſſing ſhe may meet with hereafter."

Mrs. Halnaby left Byram to his ruminations, as ſoon as ſhe had given him theſe brief memoirs, which ſerved only the more to incenſe him againſt the Rufford family. —As if he expected to perceive ſome alteration in Joanna's looks, now that he was acquainted

acquainted with her origin, he ſtrolled again into the dancing-room, and there, to his infinite joy, he ſaw her, not engaged in the dance, but talking to a ſmall party—he inſtantly flew to the ſpot, and, without looking at thoſe near her, aſked her, if ſhe was then diſengaged.—" Nay," ſaid a young man near her, " pray let it not be ſuppoſed we have been deficient in our chivalry, ſince Miſs Doveridge's knight deſerted her ſervice—we have all offered ourſelves; but it ſeems ſhe has half engaged herſelf to another knight, who does not chuſe to make his appearance: we therefore wait only the time allowed him to return, which is till the concluſion of this dance, and then we fight for the lady:"—" Oh," ſaid Joanna, " if you are ſo violent, I ſhall be frightened, and betake myſelf to a more peaceful ſituation.—Mr. Byram," continued ſhe, addreſſing herſelf with great frankneſs to him,—" I believe I have been very rude; but I was led into

an error—till you releaſe me, I think myſelf engaged to you for the next dance."

Lambert, ſcarcely crediting his own good fortune, felt grateful for her politeneſs; and while they waited to take their places, he had the firſt opportunity of converſing with her.

Diſtreſſed as he was for time to introduce himſelf to her regard, and ſurrounded on all ſides as he ſaw her with obſtacles to his wiſhes, reſulting equally from the ill qualities of the Ruffords, and the friendſhip of Mrs. Halnaby, he was again driven to be explicit; and at the firſt favourable moment he ſimply repreſented to her how deep an impreſſion the uncommon merit of her character, and her unaffected lovelineſs, had made on his mind and its affections; but Joanna's reception of his overtures gave no encouragement to clandeſtine love: ſhe ſeemed perfectly aware, that there is a language every man, who wiſhes

wiſhes for a good opinion of himſelf, talks to every pretty woman: ſhe diſclaimed all compliments, as founded in ignorance of her character; and ſhe appeared to have been put on her guard, by experience againſt deluſive profeſſions. When Byram would have juſtified his attempting thus privately to gain her favour, by adverting to the conduct he had witneſſed in the Rufford family, ſhe ſtopt him by declaring her obligations to them to be thoſe of gratitude and juſtice—"I was an orphan," ſaid ſhe, "and expoſed to almoſt all the dangers of life, when Mr. Rufford received me into his houſe—I have ſeen many, in a ſituation ſuperior to mine, ruined for want of the protection I have experienced—if I have not been happy, I have been ſecure; and for that let me be thankful."

There was a tone which accompanied theſe words—there was a ſentiment in her eyes—there was a look of acknowledgment addreſſed

addreſſed to heaven, which gave Lambert a ſuſpicion that misfortune had been the ſchool in which this amiable girl had thus early refined her prudence. He dared not hint what he feared muſt wound her; but with all the little energy he could expreſs, unnoticed by others, and which forced concealment rendered ſtill ſtronger, he urged his novel paſſion—it was, however, to no purpoſe: Joanna coloured and joined Miſs Rufford, who was now too much elated by the *doux yeux*, and the conſoling doctrines of the little peering curate, to beſtow a word upon one, who had broken from her net, and contemned her blandiſhments.

Lambert had only to wiſh for the revolution of ſituation the ſupper might procure for him; but his ill fortune purſued him through the evening; for Mrs. Rufford, who had experienced nearly an equal portion of vexations at the quadrille table, could not be prevailed on to ſtay ſupper; and

and it became neceſſary for Lambert to offer to eſcort her home.—He thought he ſaw, in the countenance of Miſs Doveridge, when ſhe, with more aſſiduity than the good lady merited from her, aſſiſted in fencing her perſon and her beſt apron from injury, a look of ſympathetic regret for the tax laid on his politeneſs; but it was gone when he took leave of her; and he was convinced he had, like a coxcomb, fed his vanity at the expence of his judgment.

CHAP. VII.

THE ancient matron could not be charged with adding to Lambert's irritations, unleſs his nerves were too weak to bear the regular gentle ſnore with which ſhe beguiled the way home. Her ſoporific genius ſeemed admirably to apportion his doſe; for ſhe waked inſtinctively when the chaiſe entered the village of Milham-parva; and by the emphatical exclamation Lack-a-day! ſhe, at the ſame moment, rouſed her companion from the more profound reverie into which the privation of all hope had plunged him.—He recovered his recollection on entering the houſe, ſufficiently to order the chaiſe to be again at the door by day-break the next morning; and then hearing Mr. Rufford was ſtill up, he followed the ſtaggering lady into the parlour

parlour—The ſound of her huſband's voice ſeemed the trumpet to her faculties; and, without ſuffering the interpoſition of a word, ſhe gave a very accurate drawling account of the diſaſters that had, as it appeared, moſt woefully fleeced her purſe—but Mr. Rufford's little tiff of punch was nearly out; and as he did not clearly comprehend, he could not duly pity the ſorrows his wife detailed:—ſhe ſoon therefore withdrew, either too ſleepy or too angry to recollect, that neither Lambert nor herſelf had yet ſupped.—From what was preſently audible, it was, however, to be hoped, it had not entirely eſcaped her memory; though Byram, who courted nothing ſo much as ſolitude, wiſhed to avoid Mr. Rufford's interrogations on the ſubject, and made a motion to take his final leave and retire; but the old gentleman, ſtill awake to Sally's intereſts, was more vigilant, and detained him, not only to a ſecond ſupper, but a ſecond libation to *the occidental deities* at which Mrs. Rufford condeſcended to

aſſiſt

assist with resumed good humour—the old gentleman was at the zenith of eloquence, his lady in what Shakespeare calls "excellent fooling," when the younger part of the family returned from the ball, and Miss Rufford's elevated voice declared her to be in no placid mood.

The honourable Miss Doveridge, (now sunk again into humble Joan,) followed the indignant spinster into the parlour, and shewed by her countenance, that she had fully paid for all the pleasures of the evening. Miss Rufford made no other alteration in her deportment than to include Lambert in the circle of her fury—she had vented part of her ill humour on Joanna, for the unpardonable crime of having attracted attention, and left her to take care of herself; and nearly the same vindictive terms she used to Lambert, calling on her father to resent the neglect she had experienced, when Mr. Byram had not even asked her to dance; and concluding all with

with a declaration that he was ten times worſe than Mr. Sanderſon. To keep the little footing he had in the houſe, Byram ſaw it was prudent to endeavour, at leaſt, apologizing for his conduct; but Mrs. Rufford declared ſhe thought Sally had been very ill treated. Mr. Rufford began to talk importantly with oblique hints at Joanna, whom his daughter drove before her, and quitted the room in a fury. Lambert then took ſome pains to rouſe his hoſt's pride againſt an interference in ſo trifling a diſpute—a few ſmooth words blinded his judgment—perhaps it was influenced by the recollection that in Byram's family there were ſome valuable advowſons. Be it as it may, at parting, Mr. Rufford ſhook Lambert very cordially by the hand, and expreſſed his earneſt wiſh that he might find his worthy father recovered, and that he would never travel that road without remembering the poor vicar of Milham-parva.

The

The dejecting events of the evening rendering his night fleepleſs—he ſaw none of the family when he came down the next morning; but had a meſſage from Miſs Doveridge, requeſting that he would take his breakfaſt before he ſet out. In the hope of ſeeing her, he conſented to the delay; but ſhe ſhunned him—he ſaw the traces of her care in the little apparatus ſent for his *dejeuné*, but a glimpſe of her was not to be procured; and he ſet forward for Bath, inclined to repent his having quitted his road to viſit the poor vicar of Milham-parva.

On reaching Bath he found his father out of all danger, and diſpoſed to think well of the filial attention which had urged him to undertake the journey. The expreſſion of Lambert's countenance obtained him ſtill farther credit for ſympathy; and he had now leiſure to ruminate on the paſt, or contrive for the future.

Not

Not being able to diſmiſs Joanna from his thoughts; and flattering himſelf he hazarded little of his father's regard, ſhould he be diſcovered to have formed ſuch an attachment, or ſhould he diſpleaſe Mr. Rufford, he reſolved to riſk the ſucceſs of a letter to Miſs Doveridge herſelf; and to this meaſure the natural ſpirit of oppoſition inherent in moſt of thoſe not yet out of tutelage, ſtill further urged him, when he heard his father moſt warmly commending the beauty and various recommendations of Lady Jemima Fawley, ſiſter to the Earl of Armathwaite; whoſe want of fortune had made her ſo far forget her line of anceſtry, as to declare her preference of *rich commoners* to *poor lords*, a circumſtance which in Sir Clifford Byram's opinion opened a a fair path for the aggrandizement of his family, which could not at preſent boaſt ennobling honours.

Byram's letter to Joanna was expedited, immediately, after an oblique conference with

with his father on this unacceptable ſubject. It contained a more full repetition of what he had declared to her; and in the moſt eloquent terms he was capable of forming, he beſpoke her regard; but he ſpent ten days in fruitleſs expectation of a reply, ſtill retaining, notwithſtanding the diſſipation of Bath, and the ſmart nothingneſs of Lady Jemima Fawley, the impreſſion he had received. The ſecret of his attachment was confided to no one, and it preyed inceſſantly on his mind; till tortured beyond his patience with the ſuggeſtions of hope and the contradictions of fear, he ventured again to addreſs Miſs Doveridge; and at the expiration of another tedious week he received the following anſwer:

"I CANNOT treat with ſilent neglect ſentiments ſo flattering as thoſe Byram does me the honour to entertain of me; nor can I ſuffer him to cheriſh hopes it will never

never be in my power to realiſe. Let me aſſure you, Sir, that the unpleaſant circumſtances of my preſent ſituation cannot induce me to exchange it for any other; and that as I aſk nothing in this world but peace, I can liſten to nothing that may endanger my ſucceſs.

I am, Sir,
You moſt obliged humble ſervant,
J. D."

This ſingular reply found employment for Byram's eyes and thoughts till the following day, when in language ſtill more perſuaſive, with arguments ſtill more convincing, and with profeſſions ſtill more conciliating, he again beſought the inexorable Joanna, and in four days heard from her in theſe leſs brief terms:

"WITHOUT accuſing myſelf of pride ill becoming my humble ſituation; and unleſs I can ſubmit to think myſelf ungrateful, I cannot

I cannot keep that ſilence which has hitherto had no effect in diſcouraging you, Sir, in a purſuit which for your own ſake as well as mine I wiſh you would deſiſt from. I will deal very ingenuouſly with you, Sir, though I am at no time much diſpoſed to confide to any one my misfortunes; but I will be frank, that you may believe me, as I really am, ſincere.

" My ſituation at Mr. Rufford's Mrs. Halnaby has told me ſhe explained to you —it is neither flattering nor at all ſuited to my wiſhes—I had almoſt ſaid it is intolerable; but in two years it muſt end—God only knows what may follow.

" I ſhould not have replied to any one of your letters, Sir, had I not conſidered you as led into an almoſt unavoidable error by what you witneſſed during your ſhort ſtay here—you certainly might, without preſumption, ſuppoſe that I would gladly on

any

any terms accept a releaſe; but it is not ſo. I have ſeen nothing of the world but its deceptions; and nothing can induce me to enter on its ſtage.

" Forgive me, Sir; I ſat down with a reſolution to ſay much; but my ſpirits fail me; and I can ſay only, that I ſincerely wiſh, however flattering your regard, that you would think no more on

Your very humble ſervant,

J. D."

Little encouragement was to be extracted from this letter; but its myſterious appearance was an additional ſtimulus to Byram's now energetic mind: he was utterly at a loſs how to proceed. The temper in which he had left the Ruffords gave him no encouragement to repeat his viſit there; yet he could not reſolve to ſet out for London, whither his ſtudies now called him, and omit the only opportunity he

might ever have of improving his acquaintance with Miſs Doveridge, the ſtyle of whoſe letters unſatisfactory as they were, yet convinced him that the family were not privy to his attempt to correſpond with her.

CHAP. VIII.

In this hopeleſs ſtate of indetermination Byram remained torpid till his father began to urge his return to town; and he began to think it his beſt meaſure; when one morning, when the weather was ſeverely cold, and the ſtreets of Bath were rendered unpleaſant by a recent fall of ſnow, he paſſed four gentlemen who had ſtopped to talk; and beyond them he ſaw, as if waiting for one of them, a very genteel looking young woman dreſſed very cloſely, but remarkably neat in her appearance. His recent love had perhaps ſharpened his jealous tenacity of female rights and prerogatives, and he looked back with a ſentiment of reproach on the groupe who could expoſe a woman to the diſagreeable neceſſity of waiting in a

public ſtreet, the end of a converſation ſhe was not permitted to join in, when on this ſecond view he recogniſed one of the party as the young man who had danced with Joanna at Mrs. Halnaby's; and almoſt in the ſame inſtant he diſcovered the young female to be his Joanna herſelf. Regardleſs of every thing but this happy opportunity, he ſprang towards her: her countenance declared a melancholy embarraſſment; but in a low voice ſhe was going to anſwer his firſt expreſſion of aſtoniſhment, when Charles Halnaby, who was the conductor ſhe was waiting for, hearing her addreſſed, broke off his converſation, and they were immediately ſo far acquainted, that Halnaby, with the cuſtomary *non-chalance* he affected, aſked him as a favour to walk home with Miſs Doveridge, that he might purſue his journey ſome other way, with the idle party he had fallen in with. Joanna looked not a little diſconcerted at this neglect—ſhe, however, mildly expreſſed her concern that ſhe could

could not find her way back to Mrs. Halnaby's without giving any one the trouble of accompanying her. Halnaby and his companions went off with a loud laugh; and Byram almoſt ſpeechleſs with ſurpriſe, indignation, and joy, turned to accoſt Miſs Doveridge.

In a tremulous and dejected tone of voice ſhe anſwered his firſt queries, by ſaying that her kind friend, Mrs. Halnaby, was come to Bath in bad health and low ſpirits, that her ſtay there was uncertain, and that her own abſence from Milham was granted for no longer a time than while Mrs. Halnaby, who ſhe ſaid would return no more to Berkſhire, ſhould remain where ſhe was. There ſeemed to be ſomething in this precipitate emigration that was a ſecret; but Lambert had not courage to be curious; nor had he ſummoned reſolution enough to mention the ſubject of his correſpondence with Joanna, when they reached her home. He accepted her ſlight invitation to ſee Mrs.

Halnaby, and left the houſe delighted with the accidental acceſs he had obtained.

Sir Clifford Byram had in his younger years entertained a paſſion for Mrs. Halnaby: Lambert therefore found it eaſy to perſuade the old gentleman to pay her a few attentions, ſuch as are the current coin of Bath, and perhaps current no where elſe. The reſult was a very commodious intimacy between the families, which gave Lambert an almoſt daily opportunity of pleading in ſecret the intereſts of his paſſion; but he ſaw he had obſtacles not to be ſurmounted, in his father's wiſh for his match with Lady Jemima Fawley, in Mrs. Halnaby's earneſt deſire to ſee her thoughtleſs ſon ſobered by a marriage with Miſs Doveridge, and above all, in the opinion and temper of Joanna herſelf, which he feared would never permit her to diſregard his father's prohibition, to thwart her valued friend, or to hazard any part of the little comfort ſhe enjoyed. His only

only hope was, that as Lady Jemima's family honours were to be accepted in lieu of fortune, his father might be induced by the preponderating merit of Joanna to accept a ſubſtitution; but Lady Jemima had fixed herſelf in the ideas of Sir Clifford; and every oblique attempt convinced Lambert that he muſt never hope for her removal.

In the reception he met with from Mrs. Halnaby, and even from Joanna herſelf, he found that alleviation of his diſtreſs, which in the end ſerved but to encreaſe it. Mrs. Halnaby was eaſy and friendly to him: Joanna ſeemed to prefer his converſation, and to value his good opinion; but whenever he attempted to turn it to his own advantage, the repulſe he met with was ſerious; and he began to apprehend ſome inviſible oppoſition; yet he ſaw no one he could be jealous of; and as Joanna, out of regard to her friend, and from the moſt humble motives, avoided all thoſe

opportunities which ſhe might have embraced of attracting obſervation, he knew not how to trace what he could not diſcover.

The conduct of Lady Jemima Fawley ſeemed calculated to worry him into his father's ſcheme: ſhe had come to Bath at this time with an invalid relation: relying on her rank, her beauty, and her faſhion, ſhe gave herſelf in her deportment and her language the utmoſt licence; ſhe was ſlightly acquainted with Mrs. Halnaby, and had introduced herſelf there, as if for the purpoſe of meeting Byram, to whom ſhe did not at all recommend herſelf by the contempt with which ſhe treated Joanna, or the point-blank attacks ſhe frequently made on himſelf. She laughed inceſſantly; and in her laughter profeſſed her deſign to be againſt Byram's heart, which at all events ſhe would conquer; and ſuch was her wearifome humour, that Byram was often compelled to leave public

lic amuſements and private companies to avoid her. But under the ſanction of his father's partiality for her, ſhe aſſumed the right of free acceſs to his houſe, talked of herſelf as his daughter-in-law, and drove Byram to think ſeriouſly of quitting, at once, his hopes and his fears.

At this time her brother, Lord Armathwaite, was at Bath with his ſick lady, who was, after the journey, confined to her bed; and Lambert expected daily, from the progreſs of effrontery, that a coalition of family perſecution would force him to a precipitate retreat: his Lordſhip, when his Lady was ſomewhat recovered, viſited Mrs. Halnaby; and towards him in particular, Joanna's behaviour was ſo diſtant, and ſo repelling, that Lambert began to fancy it encouraging to himſelf; he knew no cauſe for peculiar ſhyneſs to a man who ſeemed to have not an atom of gaiety in his compoſition, and who appeared to be moſt ſedulouſly attentive to the health and

comfort of a wife many years older than himſelf, who had no one recommendation, either of perſon, or temper; and whom he was almoſt ſcouted for having recently married. It was, however, obvious, that Miſs Doveridge treated him with uncommon coolneſs, that it amounted to ſomething little ſhort of *hauteur*, and that in his preſence ſhe relaxed towards Byram.

Could Byram have known what was paſſing in Joanna's tortured mind, he would have ſeen leſs to hope than even in the gloomy uncertainty of his ignorance; for he would have ſeen her indiſſolubly attached to a man, every ſentiment of her heart, and every opinion of her judgment, called her to love and reſpect, till he had unaccountably forfeited all pretenſions to her regard: and now that he was irretrievably loſt to her, and in a ſituation that called on her to be cautious, ſhe was forced to ſteel her heart againſt his power and its own ſuggeſtions, and, againſt her nature, to be cruel.

Lord

Lord Armathwaite had inherited an Iriſh title, with a patrimony, not large, but competent: he had out of it portioned three ſiſters; and was ready to do whatever might be required for the advantage of the only one, who now remained unmarried: he had been a ward of Mrs. Halnaby's huſband's, and ſchool-fellow of Charles Halnaby's, and conſequently a frequent viſitor at his mother's, where he had become acquainted with, and attached to, Miſs Doveridge. Mrs. Halnaby's very early wiſh to unite her ſon and the daughter of one of her firſt friends, had rendered it imprudent to ſuffer this youthful paſſion to appear, as the diſcovery would have cut off the only means of cultivating it; but on the part of Joanna it was returned with all the ſincerity of youth and the frankneſs of ſteady affection; and in the probability that Charles Halnaby, who had neither a head nor heart, might, by ſome previous paſſion, or by his indifference to this match, releaſe her from all

obligation, this juvenile amour was conducted with hope and ſecrecy.

The ſituation which Joanna, buoyed up by all that could give confidence to youthful inexperience, could not but look forward to, had been the motive with her to endeavour at repairing the defects of her education; and ſhe had moſt ſedulouſly applied to all thoſe branches of female knowledge, which might ſave from reproach the man ſhe was attached to. His frequent viſits at Mrs. Halnaby's, and the opportunities ſhe had of meeting him there, had kept up her ſpirits under the miſeries of her ſituation in the Rufford family; but it was now about a twelvemonth, ſince Lord Armathwaite, without having manifeſted the leaſt abatement of his regard, or giving her the ſmalleſt intimation of his deſign, had broken every engagement which his conduct had implied, by marrying a woman, who for every other recommendation of her ſex, ſubſtituted only immenſe wealth.

The

The blow had been nearly fatal to the unhappy Joanna; but the ſecreſy they had obſerved, kept the cauſe of her ill health and dejection a ſecret. Conſidering herſelf as cruelly duped, and not ſeeing a poſſibility of conſtruing Lord Armathwaite's conduct at all to his advantage, ſhe had called to her aid every ſpecies of juſtifiable reſentment ſhe could find in her nature; but, ſtill ſhe loved him, and, made more vigilant by this conſciouſneſs, ſhe would not truſt herſelf to behave to him even with common complacency. Mrs. Halnaby fancied the diſtance entirely affected on his Lordſhip's part; and in this firſt renewal of her acquaintance with him as a married man, attributed to the pride of wealth what was in reality nothing more than the reſult of Joanna's reſerved conduct, and his own almoſt intolerable ſituation; which, in the ill temper and innumerable bad qualities of his wife, aggravated to the utmoſt the vexations of his mind.

This

This was Joanna's trying ſituation, when Lambert, having given his father a poſitive refuſal, in reply to a deciſive propoſal of Lady Jemima Fawley, received in return as poſitive a command to quit Bath, and return to his ſtudies in the Temple. He haughtily promiſed obedience; and in a commotion of anger and regret, he went in the evening to Mrs. Halnaby's, to ſee Joanna for the laſt time. There he found Lord Armathwaite and his volatile ſiſter, with ſeveral other perſons. Her Ladyſhip, on his entrance, ſprang forward from her chair, and, with a leap that ſhook the houſe, ſeized his arm, crying out, "Here comes *my* man—Byram," continued ſhe, ſtaring him full in the face, "only think how cruel! I have now aſked every man of my acquaintance, and almoſt all *not* of my acquaintance, if they would have me, but nobody will;—now it certainly is very hard that I ſhould go unmarried; ſo poſitively you muſt and ſhall have me; therefore,

fore, hold yourſelf in readineſs againſt I call on you ; for it will not be long firſt."

Lambert, entirely out of countenance at this addreſs, which he rather thought audacious than witty, turned his eyes in ſilence to ſeek Joanna, who was at a little diſtance in converſation with Lord Armathwaite—His Lordſhip, as if his ſiſter had ſecured the attention of the company, was ſpeaking in a low voice, and with geſtures the moſt ſupplicating. Joanna ſaw Lambert look towards her : ſhe turned haſtily, and he perceived ſhe had been in tears :—Lord Armathwaite, with affected intereſt, enquired the cauſe of his ſiſter's gaiety, and hearing it from her own lips, gently reproved it ; but all that had been diſagreeable, or was unaccountable, was preſently effaced from Lambert's mind; for Miſs Doveridge was indubitably more propitious to him than ever ; and as if, by neceſſary conſequence, more repelling to the Earl. When ſhe heard that Byram was to quit

quit Bath the next day, ſhe ſhewed ſurpriſe and regret; and in a few haſty moments, which he ſnatched at the concluſion of his viſit to bid her farewell, he thought he diſcovered enough to encourage his ſtay; yet the conduct of Lady Jemima was ſtill more powerful: he determined to ſet out for London the next morning! but previouſly to try again the effect of a letter to Miſs Doveridge. He wrote to her before he retired to reſt, left his letter the next morning himſelf at the houſe, and ſet off on his return to London.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE town was by this time growing gay, and in its lounging amuſements Lambert almoſt forgot that Joanna had, in the courſe of a fortnight, made him no reply—the energies of his mind were local and temporary; and in a return to his previous abode and habits, as no reminding ideas occurred to rouſe him, he ſeemed to have loſt all thoſe he had acquired in his journey. From this ſtate of oblivion, he was rouſed by an unexpected viſit from Charles Halnaby, a favour he could not account for, till near the moment of his adieu, when an intimation of deranged affairs, followed by a point blank requeſt of the loan of fifty pounds, reconciled to propriety and politeneſs this mark of attention. Lambert having no blinding

predi-

predilection in favour of the gentleman, excuſed himſelf, and when he had uſhered him out, ſat down with revived earneſtneſs again to addreſs Joanna.

The return of the poſt brought him this reply :—

" Sir,

" The diſtracted ſtate of mind I have been in for the laſt fortnight, would, I am ſure, plead my apology for any neglect, yet I am hurt at the rudeneſs I have been guilty of towards you. I am certainly not ſo deſtitute of vanity as to be inſenſible to your good opinion ; but I fear the world and its diſtreſſes have laid too ſtrong hold on my heart to ſuffer me ever to return the ſentiments you have in our ſhort acquaintance manifeſted for me. At preſent, I can think of nothing but the diſtreſſes of my dear Mrs. Halnaby, and the terrible conſequences they forebode to me. Her ſon's

ſon's diſſipations have exhauſted all his means of ſupplying them, and ſhe has already aſſiſted in extricating him, much to the injury of her fortune. He now calls for farther aids; and ſhe finds herſelf driven to the neceſſity of quitting the kingdom with him, in order, by frugality in a cheaper country, to retrieve his affairs. She wiſhes me to accompany her, and Mr. Rufford has been written to on the ſubject; but he poſitively refuſes his conſent. I am therefore to return to Milham in a few days. I have the ſatisfaction of telling you Sir Clifford continues in good health. Lady Jemima's conſtancy to you has been a little ſhaken within theſe few days, by the ſuperb retinue of a young Weſt Indian; but as he quickly left the place, ſhe again enquires after you, and projects new modes of conqueſt. She accompanies Sir Clifford every where, and makes him introduce her as his intended daughter-in-law.

" I ought not to conceal from you, Sir, that Mrs. Halnaby is privy to your having written to me. Before ſhe underſtood from me that I could give no encouragement to addreſſes of any kind, ſhe kindly reproached me for endangering the only hope of her life, her ſon's being brought to recollection through my means. This is certainly complimenting my power at the expence of probability; but it is a reaſon with me for avoiding ſedulouſly the adding in any way to ſo excellent a woman's diſtreſſes; and I truſt it will have the ſame effect on you.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

J. D."

Byram, ſtimulated afreſh by the preſent idea of Joanna again at the mercy of the Ruffords, inſtantly on reading this letter, turned his thoughts to ſome means of acceſs to her. He would have immediately ſet out for Bath; but his father, and ſtill more

more Lady Jemima, were obſtacles he could not contemn. He thought the chances much in favour of Mrs. Halnaby's return to her houſe, previous to her leaving England; and he meditated a haſty viſit t her, which he believed he could very decently excuſe, by offers of ſervice, and by manifeſting an intereſt in her diſtreſſes. He concluded that Joanna would remain with her to the laſt moment; and he almoſt hoped he might, by repreſentin to her, in ſtrong terms, the total indifference of Charles Halnaby towards her, the miſery of ſuch an union, and the additional ill treatment ſhe muſt expect from the Ruffords when ſhe had loſt her reſpected friend, prevail on her to quit ſo unpromiſing a ſituation. He could not imagine that his father's reſentment, ſhould he ſucceed, could laſt longer than till he was of age: he ſaw in his fancy a fair proſpect, and he reſolved to ſet out for Mrs. Halnaby's with all his arguments in his head.

He

He was ſo fortunate as to reach the houſe without encountering any one of the Rufford family, and ſeeing an old ſervant of Mrs. Halnaby's, he made ſure of his ſucceſs, and enquired only if his miſtreſs was at home. "My lady is," replied the man. "Then tell her I wiſh to ſpeak to her on particular buſineſs." The man ſoon returned with a look of reception, and Byram followed him to a ſmall parlour, where he pictured to himſelf he ſhould ſee Joanna with her friend.

It was early in the evening, but dark; and the one candle in the room burning not very brightly, Lambert blamed that for the miſtake he made on entering, when he imagined he ſaw two ladies, very different from thoſe he ſought, ſitting at a ſmall table playing piquet: but the next moment convinced him that he had met with a ſad diſappointment; for, in a hoarſe crabbed voice, he was addreſſed by the lady, who ſat with her face towards him,

him, in the encouraging terms—" Well, young man, what do you want? What, I ſuppoſe, you are come after my butler's place; but, I aſſure you, I will have no extravagant, dreſſy fops in my houſe. I have got one that is extravagant enough already; he and his troop——" A deep yawn from the lady, whoſe back was towards the door, had been the only note ſhe had added to the harmony till now, when ſhe attempted to ſpeak, but was ſtopt by the authoritative tone of her ſuperior, whoſe figure Lambert now ſurveyed, and perceived her to be a very decrepid ancient dame, ſupported by pillows, her feet wrapped in flannels, and laid on the ſopha ſhe ſat on. Diſeaſe and ferocity were in her looks; and while ſhe ſcouled and grumbled, Lambert, not at all diſpoſed to relieve his curioſity by a queſtion, made towards the door. His hand was on the lock, when ſomebody ran furiouſly towards it on the outſide, and it was burſt open by Lady Jemima Fawley, who ſeized

on

on Byram, and, with her uſual exclamations, dragged him to the light. The old lady was beginning to rave, when her ladyſhip ſtrove to ſilence her, by introducing Byram as her intended huſband. "Well," replied the ſcold, "if it is any body likely to rid me of you, ſo much the better:—you may aſk him to ſit down." She then returned to her game, while Lady Jemima drew Lambert to a ſopha, ſat down cloſe by him, and keeping faſt hold on him, as if fearful of his intention, ſhe tried to engage him in converſation; but ſuch a ſituation was not to be endured. While ſhe rattled, with a purpoſe much deeper than was conſiſtent with *gaieté de coeur*, the old lady growled at the whole party, and her obſequious partner leered round to take a ſurvey of Lambert. He therefore, without ceremony, broke away, and ruſhed out of the houſe, directing his chaiſe to Reading, where he meant to paſs the night. There he learnt that Mrs. Halnaby had let her houſe for the enſuing year

to Lord Armathwaite, and that the lady he had been introduced to was the Countess. He could hear nothing positive of Miss Doveridge; but it was supposed she was at the vicarage. Unwilling to quit the country without seeing her, he the next morning wrote a civil intimation to Mr. Rufford that he was in the neighbourhood, and would dine with him. He scarcely knew what answer to expect; but when he recollected who governed the family, and how heinously he had offended that superior power, he could not but augur ill. However, after a tedious expectation of the return of his messenger, he received, from the fair hand, and in the elegant language of Miss Rufford, this comforting billet:——

"Dear Sir,

"This is to lett you know, as we are all extream obliged to you for your polite letter, and that my papa having got the gout in his hand, we shall all be very glad to see you, as he cannot

right himſelf. We all hope all old ſtorys will be forgott, and hope you will take a bed at our houſe, as we all know whoſe contrivance they were and the days are ſo ſhort.

" Your ſervant to command,
" SARAH RUFFORD."

It might be extracted, from the complex ſtyle of this letter, that the family at the vicarage would not ſhut their door againſt Byram.

This was ſufficient for him; and with hopes that more than counterbalanced the diſguſt he felt at every recollection of the family character, he found himſelf ſeated cloſe to a good fire, and the vicar's flannel hand—The two ladies made their *entrée* in due time; and his reception had all the attributes of a welcome, but Joan did not appear, and though from the anſwer to the enquiry he made after her, he conjectured that ſhe was in the houſe, dinner paſſed without her; and he feared ſhe was now totally excluded.

CHAP. X.

THE wine was juſt ſet on the table, and Miſs Rufford was in the zenith of her airs, when a ſervant entered and pronounced Lord Armathwaite's compliments to the family, and would be very happy if they could do him the favour to ſpend the evening with Lady Armathwaite—his particular compliments to Mr. Byram and Miſs Doveridge, and hoped they would be of the party. The joyful ſound of title had tickled the ears and twirled the prominent eyes of Miſs Rufford, but the laſt words ſobered her; and repeating *Mr. Byram and Miſs Doveridge indeed!* ſhe remained, contrary to her uſual cuſtom, when orders were to be iſſued, ſilent. Her father appealed to her—Mrs. Rufford drawled out, "Aye, aye, let us go, may be we ſhall

have a comfortable pool with the old lady." Miſs ſeemed to heſitate only about Joan—whether ſhe ſhould go, or be left behind—The ſervant whether ſo directed, or prompted by ſome intereſt for Joan, added, if Miſs Doveridge could not come, it was to be put off *till* ſhe could.—At this provoking inſtance of attention, Miſs Rufford loſt all patience, and was running out into exclamation, inſtead of returning an anſwer, when her father ſoothed her with "Nay Sally, it is never ſafe to offend a Lord:" and an anſwer of acquieſcence was ſent back. Then began all the buſtle of conſideration on the grand ſubject of habiliments fit for a lordly viſit—"I muſt have my hair dreſt," cries Miſs—"My beſt apron is unluckily in the waſh," cries Mamma--"Let my beſt caſſock be looked out," interpoſes the vicar—"I wiſh I had bought that cap I cheapened at Reading laſt week," replies Miſs, with her hand againſt her cheek in deep meditation. All was now vexation and hurry—

the

the meſſage like a bomb-ſhell had diſperſed the party, who went in queſt of apron, caſſock, and tawdry make-ſhifts — No one thought of poor Joan, excepting Lambert, who was at this juncture in a predicament that ſhe alone could relieve him from: he had no attractive to Lord Armathwaite's; nay every thing repelled him from the houſe, if ſhe were not of the party: he had not yet mentioned his having called there in his way; but now to provide againſt all emergencies, as ſoon as he had a hearer, he reported the attempt he had made to return Charles Halnaby's call on him in town, concealing, however, the intereſted purpoſe with which that civility had been paid him. Mr. Rufford having regained his tranquility, ſeemed happy in an opportunity of gratifying his gouty ſpleen by a relation of Mrs. Halnaby's domeſtic diſtreſſes: as his hopes from her liberality were at an end, he ſeemed not a little elated by the ſubſtitution of the titled family, and talked with infinite

complacency and chriſtian favour, of the pains he had taken to accommodate a ſermon, which, five and twenty years before, he had preached to his own ſatisfaction, to the grand occaſion of the old Counteſs's making her firſt appearance at Milham church; and how grievouſly he had been diſappointed by her infirmities.

At length all matters were arranged for the viſit, and Lambert, who to the aſtoniſhment of Miſs Rufford, made no alteration in his dreſs, nor any apology for it, was forced to riſque the chance of Joan's being of the number of viſitants.—Lord Armathwaite ſent his coach for the party. It was announced: Mr. Rufford was all in a buſtle becauſe his family had again diſperſed, and were not ready to depart when the carriage came: he ſent the ſervants his beſt brandy-bottle: he remonſtrated; nay, he almoſt ſcolded his dear Sally for being ſo rude as to make a nobleman's carriage wait: he could

could ſcarcely refrain, even before Byram, from declaring how much he feared he might loſe by this negligence of politeneſs—his wife, whom nothing could haſten, ſauntered into the room—he enquired for Sally—he heard that, diſſatisfied with her ornaments, ſhe had attempted to give them a new arrangement, that the attempt had demoliſhed her hair-dreſſing, and by a ſhower of powder had rendered her beſt gown unfit to appear in, without much diſcipline—" Where is Joan?" aſked the old gentleman, to the no ſmall comfort of Lambert—She is helping my *daghter*, anſwered Mrs. Rufford; and you know ſhe can't begin to get herſelf ready till ſhe has done with the powder, becauſe ſhe would fancy it muſt ſpoil her hair—Mr. Rufford, in a rage clambered up ſtairs to haſten his daughter, muttering all the way *coach—lord—lord—coach*, till he reached Miſs Rufford's apartment, the door of which he bounced open, and then began the ſtrife of poſitiveneſs and

inſolence; the young lady, under ſuch heinous provocation, not ſcrupling to make uſe of the firſt expreſſions that tipped her fluent tongue. The matter went to ſuch length that Lambert, who in the parlour heard every word, thought the chances were againſt Miſs Rufford's being allowed to ride in the coronetted coach; and he feared Joan would be doomed to ſtay and ſhare her ill humour; but the old gentleman's doting fondneſs was triumphant—he coaxed her to diſpatch, and now exerted his ſtronger voice againſt Joan, whom he ordered to attend, without waſting any more time on her own dreſs: her ſupplicating tones were juſt audible, while ſhe begged ſhe might be permitted to remain at home; but this with taunting ſarcaſm on the expreſs invitation ſent her, was refuſed, and in about another quarter of an hour, ſhe followed the immenſely fine Miſs Rufford, ſhe herſelf dreſt in a manner that declared ſhe had loſt the influence of Mrs. Halnaby; for her

her appearance was that of a common ſervant; her hair hid under a plain cap, her ſcanty gown of an ordinary ſtuff, and her apron of thick cloth.

It was impoſſible, even for the moſt broken ſpirit, to be inſenſible to ſo great a degree of humiliation; and ſhe entered with the tears gliſtening on her cheeks: ſhe had heard from the ſervants of Mr. Byram's arrival; and her countenance betrayed a confuſion, he would fain have conſtrued to his own advantage, but when ſhe had returned his civilities, her eyes appealed again to her ſordid gown, and he felt for her mortification. He wiſhed he could have deviſed ſome hint connected with Mr. Rufford's intereſt, for none elſe he knew would avail to induce him to wait the few minutes he had in his former viſit learnt poor Joan required for her change of dreſs, but none ſuggeſted itſelf:—he therefore tried only to give her courage; but her ſpirits

had many burdens on them far more weighty than this, and ſhe was to a pitiable degree dejected, when they reached the abdicated manſion of her unhappy friend, during the ſhort journey to which, a ſquabble between Mr. Rufford and Sally had beguiled the gloom and the diſtance.

It was to relieve the infirm Counteſs from the horrors of ſolitude, and perhaps her huſband from thoſe of her tongue, that the aid of the parſon's family was recurred to; ſhe had, in the morning, quarrelled with and diſmiſſed her dependant female. Lady Jemima having partly involved herſelf in the cenſure, had retired to her own apartment. It was therefore to her ladyſhip and her retreating woman that Miſs Rufford, who now without any ſcruple of punctilio led the van, exhibited the taſte and aſſiduity of her dreſs. She had prepared a pretty little elegant exordium to beſpeak the Counteſs's favour, and was chattering it, while

while her mother ſtood behind her, fluttering her fan, and curtſying inceſſantly, till ſhe could get near enough to the Counteſs's ſeat to introduce herſelf; but poor Miſs Rufford had not been previouſly informed, that the old lady was very deaf. She ſat with her chin on her boſom, rolling her eyes to *ken* the objects, unawares that any one was ſpeaking; but perhaps hearing the murmur of Miſs Rufford's concluſion, ſhe looked up at her, and replied in the gruffeſt voice poſſible—"Well child, I dont know who you are; but what did you make yourſelf ſuch a merry-Andrew for?"--Choking with vexation and craning up her neck, as if to toſs off the rebuke, Miſs Rufford retired, while her mamma, who did not chuſe to expoſe herſelf to the ſame ſort of Spartan compliment, only curtſied lower, and ſimpered more obſequiouſly—"Very well; I ſee you all," ſaid Lady Armathwaite, "ſit down till I have had my tea."

But Mr. Rufford was not to be repelled by any of these discouragements—he strode up; and aware that nothing less than a trumpet would strike the relaxed auditory nerves of the decrepid dame, he with Stentorian lungs, bellowed out a pious wish extracted from the conclusion of one of his best sermons on the death of the righteous—the words *happy exit*, and *happiness hereafter*, reached the Countess's comprehension: the probability of death was a subject no one ever dared to advert to in her presence; for the mention of it always rendered her furious; and she now, scouling with infinite malignity on the preacher, who stood before her, bent down to a level with herself, and resting his gouty hand on her little table, and the other on his tottering knee, muttered refractory animadversions. "What?" said she, giving him a smart blow across his inflated knuckles, with her ear-trumpet, "I suppose you are one of those my Lord brings here to torment me to death with

with low ſpirits! What! you imagine I dare ſay that I muſt be threeſcore, but its no ſuch thing I tell you--I am but juſt turned forty; and the doctors tell me that if I once get rid of this weakneſs, I have youth on my ſide, and ſhall do very well again. It was only brought on by my Lord's making me travel in the winter. So pray let me hear no more of your fine canting about another world, that I dare ſay you know nothing about; but eat your pudding, Mr. Parſon, and hold your tongue"--It required rather more zeal, and a little more philoſophy than Mr. Rufford poſſeſſed, to bear this taunting repulſe of his pious endeavours—he, good man! could not underſtand that the beſt things may be rendered abſurd by being miſplaced; and in dudgeon, which the throbbing of his hand increaſed, he hobbled to a chair.

In the midſt of this buſtle of preſentation, Lord Armathwaite had entered, and

and having addreſſed the only two of the party who ſeemed to retain their wits, he ſpoke for a few moments aſide to Joanna, and then preſented to her his wife's regard. Byram watched her reception: he ſaw her not confuſed, but agitated extremely; for which he who knew no deepe cauſe, found ſufficient reaſon in her forlorn dreſs; and he feared ſhe would retire in tears from the ſharp malignity of the Counteſs; but her ladyſhip's ill qualities defeated the cruelty of Joanna's guardians: ſhe raiſed her eyes, and almoſt ſmiled, while ſhe fixed them on her intereſting countenance, ſaying in a mild voice, "Well, my pretty girl, and who are you? why I have not ſeen any thing ſo modeſt, ſo neat and ſo pretty this many a day"—Lord Armathwaite now interpoſed by naming her as Miſs Doveridge, and repeating ſo much of her pedigree as ſerved to place her within the pale of nobility —"Aye, aye," replied the counteſs, "I knew ſhe muſt be ſomething above the common

common rank—ſee there," ſhe added, pointing with her finger to Miſs Rufford, " look at that tawdry maux, and ſee how much better this child looks—Why I hear, my dear, from the apothecary here, that your friends, though people of quality, had not it in their power to provide for you—Well, never mind; be a good girl, and you will never want friends; for I hear an excellent character of you, and that you are not treated as you deſerve—Would you like to come and live with me, child ?—I have juſt turned off my companion for being ſaucy; and I think you would do very well—turn round and let me look at you—I would have you always dreſt neat, but not quite ſo mean, poor folks ſhould never be fine indeed—Ha! child, what do you ſay to it ?—I'll give you twenty pounds a year, and your board and waſhing—you'll have nothing to do but to ſit with me, and read aloud, and dreſs my foot that I hurt a year ago, and rub this poor

arm

arm of mine; for I have no feeling in it yet.—"

" No indeed, my lady," interupted Miſs Rufford loudly, and perhaps not diſpleaſed with an opportunity of revenge, " we can't think of parting with Miſs Doveridge—we are all ſo fond of her."

" *Fond* of her! indeed!" returned the Counteſs ſhortly—" why I am told you treat her worſe than any dog--what I ſuppoſe you muſt keep another ſervant if you parted from her.?"

" I dont know, your ladyſhip, as Miſs Doveridge has any thing to complain of," replied Miſs.

" Why, who but your ſordid ſelves," ſaid her ladyſhip " would have ſuffered the child to have come to ſee me no better dreſt—is this the way you keep her in? —I ſuppoſe ſhe muſt wear what you pleaſe

pleaſe to buy—I cannot imagine ſhe likes it—young people generally wiſh to ſet themſelves off to the beſt advantage,—you, have made yourſelves fine; an dyou, Miſs, are as tawdry as need be, for which let me tell you I do not like you the better—what did you bring the child in a ſtuff gown for?—what buſineſs has ſhe at any rate with a ſtuff gown?—if ſhe has no money to buy a better, are ye all ſo ſtingy you could not give her one?—Come, my dear", continued the old lady, addreſſing herſelf again to the trembling Joanna, "do not bluſh at the folly of your guardians—you will be out of their power one day or other, and till then I will be your friend—Will you come and live with me—ha?"

"I believe," anſwered Joanna modeſtly, "I have no right to leave Mr. Rufford's family—my father's will obliges me to ſtay there; and I have nothing to complain of, but I am very much obliged to your ladyſhip."

"Well,

"Well, there's a good girl" anſwered the Counteſs—"And now," added ſhe, "order the coach again, and let it take you all away: for as to the parſon and his conceited daughter I have heard and ſeen enough of them."

Conſternation and rage ſat on the features of the trio—Joanna looked diſtreſſed, as if the cauſe of their mortifications, while Byram for her ſake enjoyed it—Lord Armathwaite endeavoured to apologize and to ſooth his wife, but in vain—Lady Jemima, now juſt ready to make her appearance, ruſhed in, ſeized Lambert, and called for the tea—ſhe ſcrutinized the whole party with her glaſs, and then turned half away to laugh—ſhe took as much notice of Joanna as ſhe thought proper, for one ſo much beneath her, and then fixed her attention on Byram, tormenting him in her uſual ſtrain on the point of their marriage.—In the mean time Lord Armathwaite went round the room with Joanna, as if ſhewing her the

pictures.

pictures.—Byram perceived that he talked very earneſtly to her, and that her mode of behaviour to him was much ſoftened. From what he obſerved, he began to ſuſpect ſome contingency in her proſpect that depended on the old lady's life; and his hopes and his ſpirits ſunk together.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

The coach was ready in about half an hour; and the Ruffords, who had only muttered their woes to each other ſince their ſcolding, roſe in ſilence to depart.—Lord Armathwaite preſſed Byram to ſtay, and aſked the Counteſs if ſhe had any objection. She replied, "No;" and added, "Let the child ſtay too, if ſhe likes it." But neither of them accepted the diſtinction; and the Counteſs, repeating very often her expreſſions of protection to Joanna, ſuffered her to follow. Lord Armathwaite, as if to pleaſe his lady, led her to the carriage. Lambert put Mrs. Rufford and her daughter in; and then turning round to look for Joanna, he ſaw the tears guſh from her eyes as the Earl quitted her hand:——it was ſtrange;——but he ſoon reſolved

reſolved this emotion into the unpleaſant incident of the viſit.

Scarcely a word was ſpoken till they reached home; and then nothing was to be heard but complaint and invective.—Miſs Rufford vented her rage and ſarcaſms on Joan in open abuſe of her new protector. Mrs. Rufford was *really ſorry*, becauſe ſhe thought they might have had ſuch a nice pool. Mr. Rufford ſeemed half inclined to blame Sally for cruſhing his hopes from this Right Honourable friendſhip, though he could ſay little in vindication of the Counteſs.

On one point the family ſeemed agreed ——this was, that they would have an early ſupper, and go to bed. At the annunciation of this reſolve, Joan was quitting the room, when Miſs Rufford, with the moſt provoking formality, beſought *the Honourable Miſs Doveridge* to remain where ſhe was, and not to give herſelf any trouble

about

about the ſupper, leſt ſhe might hurt the tender feelings of her new friend.—"How can you be ſo cruel?" were words not to to be repreſſed!——ſhe burſt into tears, and went away.

On her now all the invective ſettled; and on Byram ſoon after, for ſuggeſting her innocence. Mr. Rufford called for a bottle of Madeira, and ſeemed willing to drown unpleaſant recollections. Mrs. Rufford went to ſleep; and her daughter, with all the agitation of anger not to be forgotten, ſat down to mend a large orifice in her apron—the prime token ſhe had brought away from the houſe of malediction.

Miſs Doveridge was loudly called to ſupper, Miſs Rufford ſuperciliouſly refuſing to take her place till ſhe came, and then, with her moſt taunting affectation, offering her the upper hand. All but Lambert ſeemed in a conſpiracy to torment her; till, in a tone of firm dignity that ſeemed to awe

awe them, ſhe uttered the ſhort ſentence —" Be leſs cruel; or you will drive me to do what you may have cauſe to repent of!" ——Nothing could extort another word from her; and when Mr. Rufford had ſaid grace, ſhe curtſied her *good night*, and withdrew. Her words ſeemed to retain their power, even in her abſence, for ſhe was no more named while Byram remained one of the company.

The fate of poor Joanna ſeemed now ſo rapidly drawing to a criſis, and the capricious cruelty of the Rufford family ſeemed ſo friendly to Lambert's wiſhes, that he revolved all night the poſſibility of obtaining half an hour's private converſation with her before he left the houſe, when he meant to urge directly the alternative his paſſion offered her. Her myſterious menace to her tormentors he conſtrued to his own advantage, and waited impatiently for day-break, not doubting that, if he roſe early, he might procure an interview with her;

her: but he waited and watched in vain; for, on leaving his apartment, he ſaw her deeply engaged in the buſineſs of ironing; and the anſwers he obtained to his civil enquiries, at the door of the laundry, ſhewed no diſpoſition in Joanna to avail herſelf of his ſentiments in her favour.

Underſtanding, at breakfaſt, from Miſs Rufford, whoſe chagrin was not yet worn off, that there was little chance of his ſeeing her dependent, he determined to return to London, and from thence to addreſs her more earneſtly than ever. No oppoſition was now made to his departure. Lady Armathwaite's *frankneſs* had ſo entirely engroſſed the party, that they ſeemed deaf to all other ſubjects, till the poſt brought a letter to Mr. Rufford, which he ſcanned with an eye that declared the contents ſomewhat perplexing. His wife and daughter had quitted the room; and when he had, two or three times, deliberately peruſed the letter, he turned about, as if

ſeeking

ſeeking ſome one to unboſom himſelf to—"A very curious epiſtle, indeed!" ejaculated the divine, removing his ſpectacles from their ſeat on his noſe. "I wonder who, or what, the man takes me for that wrote it?——to ſuppoſe that a man of *my* character, and holy profeſſion, would ſo betray a ſacred truſt!——Oh, it is ſcandalous to think what times we live in!—See here," ſaid he, holding out the paper to his companion,—"ſee what a pretty fellow this is——I ſuppoſe you may know him." Lambert read as follows:

SIR,

"I WAS at Bath a few weeks this ſeaſon, and there I met a very pretty girl—a ſort of *protegée* to a tabby, whoſe name I cannot charge my memory with; but her ſon has ruined her, and ſhe is gone abroad. I underſtand this *protegée* of her's went by the name of Doveridge, but I am told ſhe is a natural daughter of

your's, and the old woman ſhe was with. Perhaps you would have no objection to getting rid of ſuch an incumbrance, eſpecially as her mother has ſneaked off; if ſo, I live as much in ſtyle as any man of my rank and fortune. I love the girl, and I will make her the beſt ſettlement I ever offered—a houſe, ſervants, carriage, table, and twelve hundred pounds a year. I wait your anſwer; and am, with profound reſpect,

" Sir,

" Your moſt obedient, and

" Very humble ſervant,

SURCHESTER."

Sçavoir Vivre,
10th Feb.

Byram was ſhocked at the inſult offered to Joanna in this letter. He knew Lord Surcheſter to be one of thoſe common perſonages in London, and in all places of public ſociety, who ſtick at nothing to keep up the character of *men of faſhion.* He was

was, however, glad to perceive in Mr. Rufford's countenance, and behaviour, all the ſymptoms of honeſt indignation; and offered to expedite the important buſineſs of cruſhing ſuch libertine views, by being himſelf the bearer of his reply, which the compoſer of ſermons, after about an hour and half's cogitation in his ſtudy, brought forth directed, in a hand his gout apologized for,—To the Right Hon. my Lord Surcheſter, *Sçavoir Vivre ſtreet*, London.—Lambert eagerly took the charge of it, and was ſoon on the road to London. He ſtopped in St. James's ſtreet, in his way to his chambers, and enquiring for Lord Surcheſter, was introduced to him. He requeſted a private interview; and then, with ſome expreſſions that intimated his opinion, delivered Mr. Rufford's reply, which he was aſtoniſhed to perceive effected no change in the features of his lordſhip. He waited only till he ſaw him grin at the ſubſcription, and then ſaying, he hoped his lordſhip had enough now of

making ſuch overtures, was retreating, when the peer, taking a caper acroſs the room, and aſking himſelf with much energy, and a faſhionable oath, whether he was not a lucky dog, turned his attention to the bearer of the letter, with a broad ſtare at his features. Recollecting Byram as one of thoſe facile characters who mingle in all companies, and ſeldom render themſelves diſagreeable by oppoſition, he ſhook him heartily by the hand, and thanked him for being the meſſenger of ſuch good news. Lambert drew back, and, looking grave, ſaid he was glad to find his lordſhip had yet ſenſe enough to be pleaſed with a diſappointment.—"Diſappointment! my boy," repeated he, clapping Byram on the back—"why, 'tis the very thing I could wiſh—the old fellow's a wiſe one; he knows his intereſt; but he's for making a deviliſh hard bargain though. ——Well, let him ſend her up: I'll have her put in training immediately. Do you know her? I ſuppoſe ſhe's very ignorant —ſhe

—ſhe looks ſo; for ſhe bluſhed furiouſly once when I ſtopped her in the paſſage at her mother's lodgings, and tried to make her acquainted. But I'll have maſters of all ſorts for her; and ſhe ſhall have the neateſt carriage in town; and then I ſhall be a happy man!"

"You would be a villain!" muttered Lambert. "Thank heaven, my Lord," ſaid he aloud, "Miſs Doveridge is too well protected to fear you." "Protected!" rejoined the nobleman:—"why the old man is as meek as I could wiſh him—he is wiſer than to refuſe ſuch an offer for his brat. See, here, what he ſays, if you don't know already."

He then ſhewed Lambert Mr. Rufford's letter; when, to his inexpreſſible aſtoniſhment, he found that he had been duped, and made the meſſenger of a moſt nefarious acquieſcence; that Mr. Rufford had written in a ſtyle totally different from that

in which he had expreſſed himſelf to him; that he pretended to take for granted a ſuppoſition, not to be admitted, that Lord Surcheſter's intention was to make Joanna his wife; that he had moſt artfully, and moſt infamouſly, ſtipulated for a previous reimburſement of all the expences of her maintenance and education, which he falſely aſſerted to have been enormous, and to have fallen wholly on himſelf; and, moreover, he did not deny, nor attempt to contradict, the illegitimate pedigree his lordſhip had beſtowed upon her.

Lord Surcheſter, with more ſhrewdneſs than Lambert had promptitude enough to anſwer, aſked him what he now thought of old *Dominie*; ſeemed elated with his ſuperior knowledge of the world; and declared his intention of ſetting off the next morning for Mr. Rufford's. Lambert replied only by a requeſt, to be allowed a copy of the letter he had brought. Lord Surcheſter (who, in the mood of the moment,

or

or perhaps at any other time, would have parted with whatever a prudent man would have kept) told him he might have the original, if he could make any uſe of it. They parted, ſeemingly good friends; and Lambert, having diſcharged his chaiſe, and procured another, returned with all poſſible expedition the way he had come; hoping he might at once ſave Joanna from the villainy of her protector, and induce her to accept him.

His mind was in too perturbed a ſtate to admit of his forming any other plan than that of going abruptly to the vicarage, and demanding an interview with Miſs Doveridge; but all cogitation was ſoon rendered nugatory; for, at the inn at Hounſlow, where he ſtopped to change his carriage, he bolted on Mr. Rufford himſelf, who, puffing and blowing with importance and expedition, was calling loudly for a chaiſe, and enquiring of

two or three waiters for ſomebody he ſeemed in queſt of.

Perceiving, by a light one of them held, that it was Byram who was coming up, he attacked him in the moſt furious language for ſome unintelligible miſdemeanour:—he could only make out that he was a ſcoundrel and a villain, and that the law ſhould make him repent;—'till the old gentleman, ſeeming to recollect, from the ſtatute book, that his offence, whatever it was, did not come within the law's cognizance, again adverted to the powerful artillery of ſcripture-phraſed abuſe, and ſacred invective.

At this moment out popped from a little waiting parlour the lively Miſs Rufford, to whom Lambert willingly addreſſed himſelf for that information her father's vehemence with-held. She curtſied, and ſimpered, and ogled, and replied—that as her papa was obliged to come to town on

on this *molancholy* buſineſs, ſhe had taken the opportunity to ſee a little of the world. She ſuppoſed her papa would be kept, perhaps, a week in *Lunnun*, and in that time ſhe thought a body *mought* ſee a good bit of it.

This was but little more ſatisfactory than the interjection of Mr. Rufford; and Lambert ſeriouſly and earneſtly begged to know what it was that was laid to his charge, and what had occaſioned this precipitate journey. At laſt ſome incoherent proteſtations that the expences of it ſhould be charged to *Joan's eſtate*, told him that ſhe was the cauſe of it; and in about a quarter of an hour more he learnt, that, in conſequence of what Miſs Rufford called her *gently rebuking* her, for her behaviour the preceding evening, Joanna had privately quitted the houſe, and was not to be heard of; and that the ſuſpicion of her having fled to Lambert had occaſioned Mr. Rufford's taking the road to town.

This idea being no longer tenable, either by folly or obſtinacy, the old gentleman ſeemed inclined to return home, to which meaſure his daughter ſeemed duly averſe. She conjectured that Byram was going to London, and laid out, with all the little cunning ſhe was miſtreſs of, to accompany him thither. He endured all her idiocy and impertinence tamely, for he was meditating only how he ſhould moſt completely overwhelm her father in his own iniquity; and ſhe had proceeded ſo far as to lay hold on his arm, to awaken his attention and procure his concurrence, when Lambert, taking from his pocket-book the letter to Lord Surcheſter, ſhewed it to Mr. Rufford, bidding him recognize it, and bluſh. The old gentleman obeyed to the utmoſt of his power in both points; having firſt, however, tried the ſucceſs of a ſtout denial. He then proteſted he had underſtood Lord Surcheſter's overture as that of marriage; blamed his own poor fooliſh head that was not equal to the length

length of other men's; and thanked heaven for ſending in his favour the interpoſition of Byram, to ſave him from an error his zeal for Joan's advantage might have led him into, but at which he now ſhuddered, even in recollecting it.

Lambert had ſo infinitely the ſuperiority, that Mr. Rufford had no hope but that of purchaſing his ſilence by unconditional ſubmiſſion. Common civility, to a man under ſuch degrading circumſtances, would have been almoſt tantamount to inſult:—Lambert, therefore, thought of nothing but ſearching for Joanna, leſt by accident ſhe ſhould fall in Lord Surcheſter's way; he therefore inſiſted on Mr. Rufford's accompanying him back to his living, and offering, in the moſt public, even if it were the moſt humiliating manner, every inducement that could allure Miſs Doveridge to return. Incenſed and ſoured as he was, he refuſed to be tormented with the vivacious impromptus of Miſs Sally; ſhe had

therefore her option of the eaſt or weſt—*dear Lunnun* predominated, and ſhe ſet off for the charming place, too ignorant and too confident to ſuppoſe ſhe wanted any eſcort.

CHAP. XII.

No enquiry was omitted on the road to Milham that could procure tidings of Joanna; but it ſoon appeared that there was little chance of her being betrayed; for the anſwer returned as they drew near Mr. Rufford's pariſh, convinced Lambert that his flock rejoiced ſecretly in the emancipation of the wretched Joanna. The old gentleman's fatigue would not ſuffer him to go farther than his own door; but his companion continued the ſearch for more than three days; the laſt place he had ſearched was Henley; and he was returning by Caverſham, to give a melancholy account of his ill ſucceſs, when his poſtillion ſuddenly ſtopping, told him there was a young woman on the road before them who ſeemed to anſwer the

the deſcription of the lady he was ſeeking—Lambert looked forward, and being convinced the lad was right, he jumped out of the chaiſe, and ran to overtake her—ſhe turned round at the inſtant, and ſtaggering a few paces, fell to the ground.

It was ſome minutes after Lambert had raiſed her, and aſſured her of her ſafety, before Joanna, who appeared in the laſt ſtage of weakneſs and fatigue, ſeemed to comprehend her ſituation: he put her into the chaiſe, ſhe offering on her part, no oppoſition; but as he had his own intereſt to conſult, he determined not yet to carry her to Mr. Rufford's, but make towards the neareſt farm-houſe: there he learnt from her that the reduplicated cruelty of the family ſhe depended on, had driven her to the deſperate meaſure of quitting the houſe, in the hopes of getting her living in peace, by the labour of her hands, but that finding it a much more difficult matter to get employed than ſhe had

had imagined it, ſhe had wandered till her money was ſpent, and now had no alternative but throwing herſelf on the mercy of her enemies.

From this ſtill more deſperate meaſure, Lambert warned her by a recital of Lord Surcheſter's application, and by the production of her guardian's reply to it. Surpriſe, fear, horror, all co-operated with Lambert's expreſſions of ſympathy and vows of attachment, to make her look towards him as a preferable protector. She told him frankly, it was ſolely to her diſtreſſes that he owed her hearing him with any degree of complacency; but that conſidering him as her only reſource againſt more dangers that were crowding on her, and as one ſent perhaps by Providence to ſave her, if he thought proper to make her immediately his wife, ſhe would endeavour to diſcharge her duty to him as far as the harraſſed ſtate of her mind would permit. Byram was at the moment

moment too much in love to contemplate the indications of a tortured heart in this deſperate acquieſcence, to which nothing but the duty of ſelf-preſervation prompted the object of his paſſion :—he could not ſee that in it ſhe renounced the deareſt tie that had held her to the world and its miſeries ; that in one ſigh given to the memory of her firſt affection, ſhe ſacrificed all that ſhe had fondly imagined, and had a thouſand times been aſſured, ſhould atone for the want of parents and protection, for indigence and hardſhip of every kind—he could not hear the adjuration that called heaven to witneſs her ſubmiſſion to neceſſity, and her unſhaken conſtancy : he could not trace her tears to their true ſource, the ſevering, the final ſeparation of all that youth in its moſt fervid colour paints to the imagination as perfect union—for Byram was moſt ſelfiſhly enamoured, and would have ſhut his ears againſt any information that could have operated againſt his hopes.—Near

as

as he was to their accompliſhment, he cared no otherwiſe for the ſtate of Joanna's affections, or the portion of them he might be allowed, than as her ſteadineſs was concerned in the queſtion; and perhaps had he been aware that ſhe was too wretched to have preference or choice, it might only have ſerved to abate his ardour by increaſing his ſecurity.

It was the awe which Joanna's character bore with it; it was the want of habitude in vice, or perhaps it was a prudent wiſh to render her indiſſolubly his own, that in the preſent circumſtances excluded from his mind all idea of a leſs permanent ſituation than that of wedlock. Lambert's character had yet no die ſtamped on it: he might be any thing that the next revolution of the earth ſhould preſent to his choice, and he now ſeemed, while doing a really virtuous and humane action, from whatever motive, to be a hopeful candidate for the praiſe of virtue.

Qualms

Qualms of conſcience with regard to filial duty troubled him not; he pledged himſelf to Joanna for his father's forgiveneſs, if their marriage could only be kept ſecret for a few months, when he ſhould be of age, and he had reaſon to believe Lady Jemima Fawley would have diſpoſed of herſelf; and he next turned his thoughts towards the moſt ſecret method of keeping their plans to themſelves.

All other ſchemes being rendered objectionable by the driver's being privy to the rencontre, it was decided that he ſhould accompany her to Milham, and there formally reſtore her to Mr. Rufford, from whoſe reſentment ſhe would have the leſs to fear on account of his daughter's abſence, and Byram's hold over his character. —Their ſcheme was, that he ſhould then quit the place in haſte, as being earneſt to get back to London; that in the mean time ſhe ſhould prepare whatever cloaths ſhe might want for a journey, that ſhe ſhould

ſhould engage the young maid-ſervant, of whoſe fidelity ſhe was ſecure, to accompany her, and that before day-break ſhe ſhould quit the houſe and meet Byram, who would have a chaiſe ready at a ſmall diſtance. The many dangers awaiting them, made it adviſable that they ſhould be married out of England. —The uncertainties attending croſſing the channel made Scotland the preferable place; and Joanna, in all the paſſiveneſs of wretchedneſs, and all the dejection of a breaking heart, gave her concurrence.

She was received at her guardian's in a way that ſhewed how neceſſary a powerful friend was to her. To avoid the reproaches rained on her, ſhe begged permiſſion to go to bed; and Byram, remaining no longer than to convince the ſhallow craft of Mr. Rufford, that he for ever forſwore him, his houſe and connections, went to Reading to wait there the hour of meeting Joanna.

Every

Every thing proſpered as he wiſhed; and when ſhe was miſſed in the morning, the old gentleman, perhaps, recollecting if he *did* ſuſpect Byram, that he had in his poſſeſſion what he ſhould not care to ſee brought to light, forbore to moleſt the fugitives.

Purſuing the croſs roads they had entered the county of York, when Byram perceived that the hurry and fatigue would be more than Joanna could bear without reſt, and he began to fear that he ſhould not be able to prevail on her to go forward. To obviate this danger, he meditated on the poſſibility of their being married ſhort of the uſual place; and recollecting that not far from Roſlington bridge, he had a friend ſettled on a ſmall living, he propoſed to Joanna an application to him. She approved the idea: for ſhe almoſt wiſhed for an obſtacle that might releaſe her: they turned out of the road, and ſoon found the diminutive village they were in

queſt

queſt of—it contained only a ſmall public-houſe, and one farm-houſe, and Byram leaving Joanna and her maid at the former, took a horſe and rode over to the church to ſeek his old ſchool-fellow Mr. Broome.

This young man had been educated by his father, at Eton, with the reſolution of making him what no one of his family had ever yet been, a ſcholar and a gentleman. The ſcheme turned out in the common way—at Eton he had learnt to be expenſive—at Cambridge his ſpirit had been broken by mortification, his father's ſlender finances were exhauſted in this vanity, and at his death he found himſelf unprovided for, and with a ſiſter to maintain. By great good fortune he had obtained orders and a very ſmall curacy, and lately the friendſhip of a gentleman in the neighbourhood had placed him in the vicarage of N——, where he lived irreproachably and reſpected.

He

He received Byram's visit with joy and gratitude, and having learnt under a promise of secrecy, the important errand he travelled on, he promised his concurrence on these only conditions, that his safety should be consulted, and that Byram should for that purpose, wait the publication of banns: he pledged himself for his perfect security in this obscure village, and made him an offer of his own and his sister's best endeavours, if he could prevail on Miss Doveridge to reside with them for the time.

Joanna who was really ill, and wished for quiet, made no objection to the proposal—Byram thought he could turn the accident to his own advantage by writing to his father, as if he was on a visit to Broome; and accordingly they removed to the vicarage where they were very hospitably entertained, and where their time passed not unpleasantly. Miss Broome, who fortunately for herself, had not an idea

idea above her ſituation, was delighted with her elegant viſitor; and Joanna by appearing pleaſed, endeavoured to repay her aſſiduities.

No accident happened to diſconcert their ſcheme; the next town was too far off, to hear ſuddenly of the lovers, who were married without moleſtation the firſt day that the law permitted it.

Byram ſtill ardent and ſolicitous, immediately brought his wife to London, as the beſt place of concealment, and took for her a very neat houſe in a quiet ſituation near his chambers; and regarding rather Joanna's *natural* ſituation than that he found her in, he procured her, to the utmoſt extent of his finances, every thing that could tend to her comfort. She accepted his kind intentions; and in a little time found gratitude no bad ſubſtitute for love. Nothing was wanting on her part that could ſecure his reſpect and eſteem:

he

he ſpent every leiſure hour with her in all the comfort of domeſtic peace, and mutual attention.——In a few months her ſenſe of duty, and his unwearied kindneſſes, produced a faint glow of chearfulneſs in her mind; he cheriſhed it with rapture; and fearing her health might ſuffer from a cloſe confinement to London, he removed her to a ſmall diſtance from it, for the autumn: his father had been and ſtill remained engaged in the care of an eſtate in Ireland; ſo that he had leſs to fear from his diſcoveries. Miſs Rufford was ſafe at Milham, after her excurſion to dear *Lunnun*; and there ſeemed no one to watch their movements.

CHAP. XIII.

A YEAR had flown over the heads of theſe two perſons, and Fortune ſeemed to have repented of her early cruelties to Joanna. Nothing could have been more ſtrictly right than the conduct of Byram. His motive ſeemed indubitable; and his wife reverenced him as one of the firſt of human characters. His ardour was ſtill kept alive by expectation; and the birth of a daughter ſeemed an event that ſecured him to the ſide of virtue. His love for Joanna was at the time increaſed by the more than common danger her life was for ſome days in: in his imminent fear of her death, he had required nothing but to have it counteracted by the ſmalleſt hope: he was gratified; ſhe was ſafe; but her re-

 covery,

covery, though almoſt certain, was not likely to be ſpeedy.

In this time, and when he was cut off from the reſource of her ſociety by the neceſſity of her being kept quiet, and retiring very early to reſt, he began to reflect on the ſtep to which love had prompted him, and to examine the hitherto diſregarded ſtate of his finances. He was now of age, and had hoped his father would, at that period of emancipation, if he did not render him independent, very much increaſe his liberality towards him; but Sir Clifford always ſeemed, on application, diſpoſed to make every favour he could beſtow conditional; and the condition annexed being no other than that of a marriage with the ſtill-to-be-diſpoſed-of Lady Jemima Fawley, Byram did not iterate his petition.

The expences of Joanna's illneſs were now felt as ſad inroads on an income he had

no

no hope of increaſing, for many years. Unuſed to think very deeply, the neceſſity was galling to an inert mind, and he ſought in company a refuge againſt it;—the town was almoſt novel to him, for in Joanna's ſociety he had almoſt forgotten the world. He was, as on a firſt acquaintance with it, charmed by its allurements:——he thought all the women greatly improved; he ſaw many of his acquaintance elevated, by fortunate matches, to a ſituation they had no inherent pretenſions to; and he began to think he had been precipitate; and that to have married a woman for whom he had no predilection, was, on the whole, better than to have gratified his paſſion at the expence of his eaſe.

With ſuch ſentiments as theſe, he ſaw his amiable wife recover ſlowly from dangers and ſufferings which had never, for a moment, diſturbed the placid excellence of her temper, or extorted from her one expreſſion of regret or impatience; but

theſe ſilent merits were not likely to plead very forcibly againſt the cowardice that ſhrinks from the common evils of life, or the covetouſneſs that pines for what virtue has once rejected. The luſtre of Joanna's eyes was gone—the glow of health had left her complexion—and her huſband had no taſte for thoſe beauties, ſtill more intereſting to a correct judgment, which nothing could ſeparate from her mind or her countenance.

The unſuſpicious temper of his wife, and her exalted opinion of his virtues, kept her blind to this change; and when ſhe was ſo well recovered as to reſume her uſual habits of induſtry, ſhe flattered herſelf ſhe ſhould find her happineſs ſtill increaſed, by the addition of her promiſing infant to her former joys. The ſummer was begun; the world had a cheerful aſpect; and if ever a ſad reflection obtruded on her well diſciplined mind, ſhe chaſed it, as rebellious and ungrateful.

Her

Her firſt uneaſineſs aroſe from her perceiving that Byram had no love for his child: his abſences from home, his numerous engagements, ſhe was neither alarmed at, nor inquiſitive about:—the hours that they had ſpent together ſhe remembered as pleaſant; but ſhe conſidered his confining himſelf then with her as a kind attention to her eaſe, the neceſſity of which had ceaſed; ſhe was aware that it was of importance to him to make connections, and to get forward in his preparation for the bar, to which he was to be called in the next term. When his affection was warm, he had talked much of the advantages he expected from his profeſſion; and ſhe felt grateful for the application ſhe ſuppoſed he exerted; ſhe did not ſuſpect that his mornings (which ſhe imagined devoted to his books) were ſpent in the faſhionable lounges, with men from whoſe opinions he could gain nothing but ill; nor that his evenings (devoted in her idea to a reſpectable ſet of friends) were ſeldom

employed so innocently as in the dissipation of an opera or a play-house.

To pacify her feelings at his neglect of the little Elizabeth, she considered how entirely confined to a female bosom must be the amusement derived from a baby; the tenderness required even in moving it, she reflected, made it an anxious charge; men could not accommodate their muscles to the delicate pressure an infant required; but she had seen Lord Armathwaite, when an impetuous lad, nurse a cottager's child with tenderness and pleasure, while the mother went to gather fruit for him:—here her thoughts dared not dwell;—she *hoped*, nay, she was *sure*, that when Elizabeth could run alone, her father would be fond of her.

It now began to grow a custom with Byram to return home very late at night, and always gloomy; then, occasionally, he would remain out till near noon, and give

no

no reaſon for it. His wife grew alarmed; and the anſwer to her next requeſt of a little money, being a ſullen declaration that he knew not where to get any, ſhe began to be ſeriouſly uneaſy. She adviſed ſome covert application to Mr. Rufford for the arrear of her income. Byram told her ſhe was a fool, as ſuch a ſtep would betray his marriage, and ruin him. He gave her a few guineas, and told her he was going into the country for ſome weeks, during which time ſhe muſt live as frugally as ſhe could.

Love itſelf could not be blind to the contraſt between Lambert's attentions the preceding year and his cruel neglect now; —a conviction, too painful to be diſguiſed, burſt on her ſenſes; and with the moſt earneſt (for it was unaffected) pathos, ſhe begged to know how ſhe had loſt his regard. He ſtrove to be civil; but his civility ſhewed the total alienation of his love.

——A flood of tears ſtopped Joanna's enquiries, and he abruptly left her.

She now knew nothing of his actions—he rarely ſlept at home, and many days paſſed without her having five minutes' converſation with him. He returned one evening very late, and apparently much fatigued: he told her he had been to Milham, having heard of the death of Mr. Rufford; that he had made an enquiry after her property, and had the *ſatisfaction* of finding her guardian had improved his confidential truſt to his own advantage, by ſelling out of the funds the one thouſand pounds allotted for her fortune; and that as he had died wholly inſolvent, nothing was to be hoped for. To this intelligence, which no preface introduced, no kindneſs ſoftened, he added a few ſentences, muttered aloud, againſt his own folly; and replying to her earneſt query, whether he had divulged their marriage, that he had not, he quitted her, while ſhe ejaculated thanks to heaven

heaven that Lord Armathwaite did not yet know what ſhe had done.

At the next opportunity of ſpeaking to him, ſhe begged that ſhe might be allowed to part with all thoſe little ſuperfluities of comfort, with which, in the days of his fondneſs, he had decked her ſituation.—Without reflecting on the virtue that prompted this ſelf-denying petition, he told her he had already thought on that ſubject; that he had taken a lodging for her a little way out of town, where he would have her remain while he was in the country, and where one maid-ſervant would be ſufficient for her.

Small as was Joanna's portion of ſelf-love, ſhe could not but feel the unpitying ſtoiciſm with which this mandate was iſſued; but, in the recollection that ſhe was Byram's wife, ſhe endeavoured to forget the punctilious ſcrupuloſity with which he

had thought it neceſſary to provide for her as a nobleman's daughter.

He remained only three days longer in town; during which time he never ſaw her but when he appeared intoxicated, or ſo agitated, as to make her ſuſpect he had had recourſe to that moſt deſperate of all refuge, the gaming-table. He ordered her to remain where ſhe was till two days after his departure, and quitted her without giving her the ſmalleſt ſatisfaction as to his deſtination, the length of his ſtay, or the means by which ſhe was to exiſt in his abſence. With all the grudging that can accompany the *wiſh*, but not the *courage*, to be unjuſt, he threw a ſmall bank bill on the table, and with a ſneer at the whimpering of his infant, whom her mother had taken from her cradle, that ſhe might at leaſt obtain a look from him, he quitted the houſe, now a confirmed hard-hearted tyrant.

He

He had not been gone ſix hours, when enquiries were made after him; and ſhe, not aware that any caution was neceſſary, with a countenance of ſorrow, that corroborated any unfavourable ſurmiſes, replied to them, by declaring her ignorance reſpecting Byram. On the following day ſhe had the miſery of witneſſing the ceremonies with which an execution enters the houſe of an inſolvent. The goods were ſeized for the arrears of rent, but ſhe met with mercy from the creditor, and was allowed to retire with her own wardrobe, that of her child, and the money her huſband had left her, to the lodging he had taken for her. Her maid, Nelly, clung to her and her fortunes in all extremities; and Joanna, whom the world had long ceaſed to have the power of cheating, ſtrove to be at peace in her miſeries.

It was impoſſible, however, not to be anxious: ſhe could not but hope Byram would, in his cooler moments, and when

detached perhaps from ill advifers, write to her; and buoyed up by this hope, let all who know what it is to pant with expectation, and to turn ſick with diſappointment, judge of her daily iterated feelings, when the poſtman ſometimes paſſed the door, ſometimes brought letters to others in the houſe, and, not unfrequently, after having paſſed, returned again to diſappoint her by an omitted letter recollected afterwards.

CHAP. XIV.

Two months wore away thus; and Joanna's ſtrength and reſources were faſt failing under her agonizing ſituation. The neceſſity of her life to the preſervation of her daughter's, encouraged her to exertions of her ſpirits, which, while they diſguiſed, encreaſed her danger; and in another fortnight ſhe was unable to quit her bed. Aware of her perilous ſtate, and of the aggravation it received by her total eſtrangement from the whole world, excepting only her maid-ſervant, ſhe called her to her; and firſt endeavouring to inſpire her with fortitude to behold her miſtreſs's diſtreſſes, ſhe began to plan with her ſome ſcheme for the preſervation of the little infant, when it ſhould have loſt the only parental care it could look for. Nelly was well

well diſpoſed to be humane, but the extreme poverty to which ſhe was born, and in which her friends lived, was unfriendly to her good intentions. Her miſtreſs, therefore, having no other reſource, thought of intereſting Lord Armathwaite for the young Elizabeth; and accordingly, at her next interval of ſtrength, ſhe wrote a letter to his lordſhip, in which, giving a brief account of her misfortunes, ſhe conjured him, by the remembrance of their former hopes, to protect from the horrors of want, a creature, who was denied the foſtering care of both its parents. This letter ſhe ſealed, and kept conſtantly under her pillow, from whence her maid was to take it, immediately after her deceaſe; and, as ſoon as was poſſible, to remove herſelf and the child to her own home, where ſhe might, probably, as it was in the village near which Lord Armathwaite's houſe ſtood, deliver her requeſt to him privately.

The

The letter had been written, and had remained in this ſituation near a week, in which period Joanna had grown daily more feeble; when, in the middle of one of her ſleepleſs nights, ſhe was alarmed, and her baby was awakened, by the foot-ſteps of ſome one who aſcended the ſtairs heavily, and then burſt into the room furiouſly. It was Byram, who, ſtanding at her bed's foot, ſoon manifeſted by his temper that he had not had wine enough to overcome his intellects, but ſufficient to exaſperate all his evil paſſions.

She ſpoke to him with ſurpriſe and tenderneſs, and thanked heaven that ſhe ſhould ſee him before ſhe died. He ſtarted at the word, and, drawing nearer to her, pulled back the curtain with violence: the letter dropped from under her pillow; he picked it up, and, by the candle in his hand, read the direction. Joanna ſaw inſtantly the miſconſtruction he would affix to its contents. She begged to be heard, while

while he muttered and read; but of reaſon he was now incapable, even in his few ſober hours.

When he had finiſhed the peruſal of the letter, he threw himſelf down on a chair, and remaining ſilent, his wife again earneſtly begged for a hearing. He replied—"You gave your hand to me—and your heart is another's: to him, therefore, you may betake yourſelf."

"When I gave you my hand, Byram," ſhe replied, "the beſt affections of my heart were your's:——you cannot ſay I was inſenſible to your kindneſs, or ungrateful for it while it laſted. It was my early fate to know, and to love, Lord Armathwaite; it was my early proſpect that I ſhould be his wife;—heaven only knows why I was not ſo;—it is to me a ſecret.—When my hopes were at the faireſt, he changed his intentions—married a woman he could not love—and left me to the cruelty

elty of the Ruffords. For this unaccountable departure from all his promiſes he has never offered the ſmalleſt excuſe. He told me he had done it through a hatred of poverty, and a love of money; that his motive for ſuch conduct was as bad as that of any one who follows the guidance of avarice; and that though he deteſted the woman he had married, he was well pleaſed with what he had done. Once, indeed, (the laſt time I ever ſaw him) he ſaid, a time might come which ſhould clear up the myſtery of his conduct; but I never hoped it; and, I am ſure, ſince I have been your wife I have ceaſed to wiſh it. I never deceived you by feigned affection. Before our marriage, I told you, fear for myſelf and gratitude tō you were my motives; and theſe you profeſſed yourſelf diſpoſed to accept in lieu of love: but it is of little importance to vindicate myſelf—I ſhall not long give trouble to any one.—Suffer me to die in peace—and take care of your infant—it is all I aſk."

" And

" And all I aſk," returned Byram, " is, in any way, to be rid of you; for you are at this moment moſt abominably in my way. You are not, I dare ſay, ſo near dying as you fancy yourſelf; ſo you had better think what you ſhall do with yourſelf and Miſs, for I can do nothing more for either of you."

" How can you be ſo cruel?" aſked Joanna, almoſt exhauſted with her ſorrow. " Think what you were to me a year ago ——are you not aſhamed of your own inconſiſtency?"

" I am very much aſhamed of my wife and my poverty," replied he. " I have made a very fooliſh bargain—I have got myſelf three thouſand pounds into debt—my father will not pay it—and, as my liberty is not ſafe till it is paid, I muſt find ſome means of raiſing the ſupplies. As for you, I have not the ſmalleſt objection to your putting yourſelf under Lord Armathwaite's

mathwaite's protection. I always ſuppoſed you had a tenderneſs for him; but it was none of my buſineſs, ſo I never troubled you with queſtions. I think your's is a very good plan; and to facilitate it, I can tell you the cauſe of his marriage. The man is a weak, ſuperſtitious fool—he was brought up *righteouſly*—and ſo he is always puniſhing himſelf to act up to his methodiſtical canting character.—Charles Halnaby had, like many other men of faſhion, involved his circumſtances at play, and not having the means to get out, he did, what perhaps I may do in time,—he ſhot himſelf; but he did not do the buſineſs completely. Armathwaite was ſent for—for it was done in London—and to keep Charles from repeating the wiſeſt action, in my opinion, that a *poor* man can do, he promiſed to furniſh him with the money he wanted: but he did not, perhaps, conſider at the time that he had it not himſelf; ſo he marries this odious woman,

man, and ſets Charles afloat again—to ruin himſelf afreſh, as it has turned out."

" And do you not, Mr. Byram," ſaid Joanna, raiſing herſelf on her elbow, " admire ſuch generoſity ?——O, had I known this !——"

" You would never have married me, I ſuppoſe," interrupted her huſband.—— " Well, I wiſh, with all my ſoul, you had known it : but, as to the merit of it—— why, it is all ſuperſtition. His lordſhip fancied it his duty to ſave the ſon, becauſe, I think, the mamma had coddled him through a fever, without catching it herſelf; for that, I ſuppoſe, was the merit of the buſineſs."

The inſulting wit of Byram's jeſting loquacity was loſt on his wife ; but the merit decried ſunk deeply on her heart ; and while it aggravated her regret for her own miſſed happineſs, it comforted her with a vivid

vivid hope and confidence, that, in the world of retribution, juſtice as well as mercy would be ſatisfied. She put no reſtraint on her ſorrow, or her emotions:—brutality, ſuch as Byram's, could not but alienate a mind, which depended alone on the good qualities of his for its attachment. His humour changed: he grew again moroſe; and ſaying, only—"You ſhall hear from me ſoon,"—he went away.

His viſit ſeemed not to have altered her ſituation, and ſhe waited ſeveral days in vain, expecting his coming again. Her child was now the only obſtacle to her ſinking into a deep corroſive melancholy: for its father, as ſhe could retain no reſpect, ſhe ceaſed to feel affection; and conſidering herſelf as apace verging towards the land where human diſtinctions avail not, ſhe indulged, innocently, the ſentiments ſhe had ſo virtuouſly oppoſed, and bleſſed her fate, which in the grave offered her a releaſe from all conflict. She doubted not

that

that heaven muſt approve that attachment which was founded ſolely in a preference of the good to the bad, and was ſatisfied that in her laſt prayers ſhe might ſafely join the names of all thoſe ſhe loved. She had got ſo far in her pious confidence as almoſt to look on her child without agony, and to think on its father without reſentment, when all her firmneſs of mind was ſhaken by a letter from Byram, in which he tranſmitted to her fifty pounds, and the following ſhew of conſolation:—

"NOTHING can give me greater concern, than that I recollect having given you, in my abrupt and imprudent viſit.

"You will, I am ſure, forgive it, when I ſay it was wholly owing to a perturbed ſtate of mind, rendered worſe by the means I had taken to ſupport myſelf under it. I told you truly, that I was in difficulties:—I am ſorry you are obliged to ſhare them with me; but you may now relieve your-

ſelf,

ſelf, and make me eaſy. I aſk nothing of you, but to forget you were ever my wife: —it is for your own ſake I aſk it, ſince to me it is nearly unimportant. You may be happy now, if you conſent;—you never can, if you loſe this opportunity. A few days may reſtore you to peace, and I ſincerely hope to happineſs, for I ſtill love you; and were I to ſuffer myſelf to think, I could not bid you, as I do, renounce me under your hand, and know me only as

" Your very ſincere friend,

" L. B.

" P. S. Direct to me at Bath."

The train into which Joanna had ſuffered her meditations to ſlide had tended to confine her ideas. Byram's letter promiſed her happineſs: ſhe knew of no happineſs but that which ſhould reſtore her to the original poſſeſſor of her heart. In the hectic fervour of her imagination, ſhe fancied her huſband's myſterious expreſſions imported no leſs than that Lady Armathwaite

was

was dead, and that he meant, now he had diſcovered her attachment, to facilitate her marriage with the Earl. Nothing had repreſſed in her heart a diſpoſition to repent of her having beſtowed her hand ſo unworthily, had ſhe not been a mother; but the innocent aggravator of her ſufferings was always, in its infant ſilence, their moſt eloquent conſolation, and in its ſmiles ſhe ſeemed repaid for her own tears. On a ſecond peruſal of the letter, for her ſenſes diſtruſted the firſt, ſhe thought ſhe ſaw the felicity that had mocked her once more offered to her; but the next reflection ſhewed it ſtill beyond her graſp. Sorrowfully ſhaking her head, and claſping ſtill cloſer to her boſom the little Elizabeth, ſhe inſtantly made her election. —— "Shall I forego thee, my babe?——Shall I deny myſelf to be thy mother?—or ſuffer thee to bear into the world with thee the ſuppoſition of infamy?——No!—the little time I have to live ſhall be marked with no cowardly deſertion of miſery——my heart

may

may love imprudently, but it ſhall never make me ſwerve culpably."

No circumſtance in Byram's conduct had, for a long time, afforded ground for a conjecture at all favourable to the integrity of his character, but this deficiency, of exerciſe had not abated the charitable candour of his wife's: ſhe ſaw infinite merit in his fancied motives, and it aſſiſted in reconciling her to the part ſhe had choſen. She haſtened to expreſs her ſenſe of his kindneſs, and in the evening of the ſame day replied to him in the following terms:

"YOUR letter, my dear Lambert, would have been myſterious to me, had not a ray of goodneſs beamed from it, and enlightened my intellects. I will not be ſo inſincere as to ſay your conduct has never been productive of uneaſineſs to me: it has coſt me many ſighs, and many tears; but it is I who am in part the cauſe of both; and

by your preſent kindneſs and tenderneſs towards me, all that I have ſuffered is obliterated. But do not ſuppoſe your wife ſtill ſuch a girl, as to forget, in a youthful, and perhaps too firm an attachment, the duties ſhe took on herſelf when ſhe became your wife. From my infancy, and ſo long as I dared truſt my heart with ſo dangerous a prepoſſeſſion, I loved Lord A.; and hope blinded me to the improbability of our union. My proſpect was cut off, and I omitted no exertion that could enable me to bear the ſtroke: reſentment towards him aided me; and as I had loved him, becauſe I believed him eminently worthy, I would have ceaſed to do ſo when I found him otherwiſe. I am aſhamed to confeſs how great was the ſtruggle. He once attempted to improve my opinion of his marriage. I felt that my fortitude could not ſtand without the aid of anger—I was wretched—you were kind to me. I thought you loved me, and I committed myſelf to your protection—not more afraid of the

Ruffords

Ruffords than of my own treacherous affections. Lord A. was too near—I muſt of neceſſity be much in his company—it was not to be riſqued. I married you moſt honeſtly; and your kindneſs ſoothed me; but when that was gone, and from your own lips I had learnt that I was an incumbrance to you, what could I do but repent and deſpair?

" I ſee in your letter your generous wiſh to promote my happineſs——I gueſs what has happened. Had it happened ſooner, I might have ſpared you much ſuffering; but I doubt not the wiſdom or the mercy of Providence, and to its decrees I cheerfully ſubmit. But can you imagine, my too indulgent Lambert, that, were the holy ties of marriage diſſoluble, I could be ſo deficient in tenderneſs, as to quit you, or my infant, for the ſake of indulging an affection, it, perhaps, were more meritorious to conquer? Our union was ſecret—I hope it is not leſs binding—

on my mind, I am ſure, it has all the force of the moſt public one. Let us, then, act according to its laws. While your difficulties continue, place me any where out of obſervation—keep me at the ſmalleſt expence poſſible——I have been uſed to work——I am not a poor helpleſs being that can ſubmit to no inconvenience without injury——I have not ſo long been accuſtomed to indulgence, as to need it; and in the kindneſs you can afford me, and the delight of rearing my little girl, I ſhall find an impulſe and reward that will ſweeten every exertion.

" Be aſſured, my Lambert, you poſſeſs every portion of my heart but its weakneſſes; and that were Lord A. now he is at liberty, to tempt me with my former proſpect, I would, without pain, reject it. —But in the character you drew of him, when I had laſt the melancholy ſatisfaction of converſing with you, you have every ſecurity:——he who could act as he has

has done, muſt be the maſter of his paſſions; and in his eyes I muſt be contemptible, were I not to be firm in my duty, however that duty may oppoſe our inclinations. I can live without his love: I ſhould be hurt to forfeit his eſteem.—— Should you have any intercourſe with him on this ſubject, tell him theſe are my ſentiments, and believe I will live and die

" Your very faithful wife,

" J. B."

CHAP. XV.

In the kindneſs of thoſe we love, there is a balm, healing beyond all medicine to a wounded mind. Joanna read frequently Byram's letter, and every re-peruſal of it preſented the merit that emanated from it, in a new light.—She thought no longer of dying, ſhe prayed for life to cheriſh her little one; and ſhe implored all the rewards of Heaven for her huſband.—She thought exultingly of the triumph ſhe had gained over her dormant paſſion; and retired to reſt with her baby in her arms, in a ſtate of peace and hope, that perhaps ſhe choſe rather to encourage than examine.—In her firſt ſleep, ſhe dreamt Lady Armathwaite was dead, and that ſhe herſelf was taking poſſeſſion of her ſituation. If ſhe felt diſappointed when ſhe awoke, it was but for an inſtant:

ſtant: ſhe could not but give one thought to the meritorious motive of gratitude to which he had ſacrificed: ſhe aſked herſelf whether Lambert's conduct was leſs laudable: ſhe wiſhed Lord Armathwaite happy in a ſecond marriage, and propheſied when her huſband's ſituation ſhould be more propitious, that the two families would be united by virtue and friendſhip, for the remainder of their lives.

Her expectation of a reply to her letter was far from painful; for ſhe was convinced it could only contain freſh motives of affection towards Lambert. She now took the moſt aſſiduous care of her wavering health, lived with the cloſeſt frugality, was thankful for the hardſhips of her youth which had left her no imaginary wants, and held herſelf in readineſs to purſue any courſe the next letter might point out. It came in a very ſhort time, but its language was not that of peace, the ſtyle of it was this:

" How could you be ſo ſtupid as to ſuppoſe I meant that Lady A. was dead? —She is more likely to live than at any time ſince her marriage—What nonſenſical romantic ideas you ſuffer to run away with your reaſon!—Nothing could more convince me you are the girl you would not be thought, than your imagining I wiſhed to releaſe you, in order to your marrying A. — This I can tell you—you may marry him when you and he pleaſe, for your marriage with me is not worth a ruſh—it is informal and conſequently illegal.—I would have perſuaded you; but as you will not be perſuaded, I muſt plainly tell you how I am circumſtanced, and then I ſhall leave you to make the beſt of your own ſituation.—You know I am deeply in debt; but you know not how deeply—my father will do nothing for me unleſs I marry A's ſiſter. I need not tell you I do not like her; but I like ſtarving in a jail leſs; ſo I have made up my mind to it, and have agreed.—Now, all I deſire

of you, is to give up your imaginary claims on me; and I will then make good to you the loſs of your own fortune, by paying you regularly forty pounds a year, which I will ſecure to Elizabeth after your death. To ſave trouble, I will as ſoon as I poſſeſs ſo much, transfer to you one thouſand pounds in the four per cents, the intereſt of which you can receive without any further communication with

"Your &c.

"L. B."

A ſtupor ſeized the ſenſes of Joanna, when ſhe found how cruelly her credulity had deceived her: the character of Byram ſtood before her imagination in the blackeſt colours; and ſhe dreaded him as a monſter, a ſavage creature, who made innocence its prey, a deceiver who put on the maſk of virtue only to ſerve the moſt vicious purpoſes.—Perhaps ſhe was as unjuſt in her cenſures as in her applauſes—

ſhe would have verged nearer to the truth had ſhe ſuppoſed him only facile and unpitying, prone to indulgence, averſe to all the evils of life, a cowardly, a ſelfiſh being!—Was ſhe not then correct in fancying him a *monſter*?—alas! the term implies *infrequency*, and therefore ſuits not a character ſo common.

Joanna's temper was meek; but it was not abject; and ſhe reſented too deeply the indignity offered her, to accept it by replying to it.—She believed not the invalidity of her marriage; but to whom could ſhe have recourſe againſt her huſband? To Lord Armathwaite alone—here ſhe was certain of a defender againſt the intended cruelty; for ſhe knew a diſcovery of her marriage would thwart Byram's plans, but as the ſcale which contained her love for Byram roſe, that more worthily filled preponderated, and fearing Byram might revenge her application by divulging her attachment, and thus bring down

down added misery on Lord Armathwaite, who was wholly in his wife's power, she preferred suffering in silence.

The night was spent in rumination ; and she rose the next morning feverish, and half inclined to refer herself to Sir Clifford Byram, thinking it impossible a father could protect a son in such enormous baseness. On this, in the course of the day, she resolved ; and fearing her increasing indisposition might deprive her of the ability to write, she began an humble simple statement of facts, but her recollection overpowered her, and she was prevented from proceeding, by the illness of her child, who partook her fever.

At this juncture her maid servant, the hitherto faithful follower of her fortunes, without the smallest provocation or any prelude of discontent, demanded her discharge. What were her views, or what her

reaſons, ſhe would not diſcloſe : ſhe received her arrear of wages, unmoved by any expreſſion of regret from her miſtreſs ; and Joanna was now compelled to give up all care for herſelf, to attend on her infant.

Her mind remained in a ſtate of indeciſion ; the letter to her father-in-law was uncompleted : paſt regrets and preſent ſufferings were abſorbed in alarm for her infant, whom ſhe watched inceſſantly : a ſlumber that gave her hopes of its amendment, ſucceeded to hours of reſtleſs wailing : ſhe placed the little Elizabeth in her cradle and was beginning to weep her lullaby ; but tears ſhe feared might impair her ſtrength ſtill more ; and ſhe took up a newſpaper which had been ſent up by the miſtreſs of the houſe in the charitable hope of amuſing her melancholy.—It was a tale of human ſufferings : and ſhe turned from the noon-tide rapine of foreign lands, and the burglarious depredation of the metropolis, with

with ſickening diſguſt. The gay chronicle of diſſipation, was ſtill leſs agreeable to the tone of her ſpirits—ſhe ſought the liſt of thoſe whom the grave waited for. She would have paſſed the titled and untitled nuptials, had not names familiar to her, caught her eye:—Lambert's marriage to Lady Jemima Fawley was announced with all the detail and circumſtance of truth! and bowing over the cradle, ſhe fainted at the conviction of his perfidy.

She recovered, before any one had been made aware of her want of aſſiſtance: her child was diſturbed; and ſhe was too weak to ſoothe it, till tears had relieved her burſting heart. She then ſunk unreſiſting into this ſtill lower abyſs of miſery. The world afforded not a ſupport to her ſorrow, and ſhe ceaſed to court its aid.

The

The compaſſion of the woman ſhe lodged with, had been awakened by the unfeeling deſertion of Joanna's ſervant; and in the afternoon of this day, ſhe made her a viſit and expreſſed a benevolent wiſh that ſhe would permit her to be uſeful to her: her ſervices were accepted; and both mother and child were benefited by them. In the lapſe of two days Joanna grew again tolerably calm. She kept her griefs concealed; and as yet could not reſolve on any ſtep, even to avert the impending horrors of poſitive want. Little hope remained of her ever again receiving the ſmalleſt comfort from the author of her woes. She conſidered herſelf as abandoned in the moſt cruel way; and though revenge was as far from her wiſh as from her power, ſhe could not but reſent the unprovoked injuries ſhe had ſuffered from caprice.

For her infant alone ſhe was anxious. Could ſhe have depoſited the invaluable charge

charge with any faithful friend, her wiſh to die inſtantly would have aided the tendency of all her miſeries; but where could ſhe look for protection for a baby in a world ſo hoſtile to its mother?—Again ſhe thought of Lord Armathwaite; but to open any communication with him, was hazardous to the peace ſhe hoped to die in. Of Mrs. Halnaby, owing to her own change of ſituation, as ſhe ſuppoſed, ſhe had heard nothing ſince her marriage—ſhe wiſhed it was poſſible to find out her preſent retreat; but to attempt it was difficult.

She was indulging in theſe hopeleſs meditations, with her baby upon her lap, in the evening of the third day after her maid had left her, when the ſudden ſtopping of a carriage at the door, made her lean forward to the window—ſhe ſaw a poſt-chaiſe with four hired horſes; and the light juſt ſerved for her to perceive a gentleman enter the houſe.—She began to fear the admiſſion

admiſſion of new inmates; and her unprotected ſituation ſtruck her recollection. In a few minutes the miſtreſs of the houſe came up with a letter in her hand—ſhe ſaid nothing, and went out of the room as ſhe had delivered it. Joanna went towards the fire to read by its light, and to her infinite ſurpriſe, and, for the firſt moment, with inexpreſſible joy, ſhe ſaw Lord Armathwaite's ſignature to the following lines:

"FORGIVE my precipitation—it was impoſſible for me to act at a diſtance: the miſerable anxiety I have ſuffered ever ſince you left the country, has been ended by, if poſſible, a more miſerable diſcovery; and my numberleſs enquiries to learn your fate are anſwered by hearing that you are wretched.—How I learnt this I will tell you when we meet—do not be alarmed—truſt to my unalterable love for you that I have ſufficient command of myſelf to offer you only my friendſhip and

and moſt zealous ſervices—O why did I, from a romantic idea of friendſhip, expoſe you to all theſe miſeries?—better would it have been to have riſqued every thing, and made you my own; but be aſſured, my beloved Joanna, you have in me a friend who will now hazard every thing to place you in eaſe and ſecurity. Suffer me, I beſeech you, to ſee you."

The palpitation of her heart was too violent to leave her the power of any exertion, even had ſhe been reſolved; but to reſolve was impoſſible. The wretched unbefriended ſtate ſhe was reduced to, made the intervention of almoſt any fellow-creature a deſirable bleſſing; but here if ſhe ſhould accept the perhaps well intentioned offer of Lord Armathwaite, ſhe muſt admit to confidence and privacy, the man ſhe ſtill loved too warmly to think on with indifference, who loved her, ſhe was convinced, with a ſtill more ardent paſſion, and who knew not only her partial-

ity

ity towards him, but the extent and ſteadineſs of her affection. There was virtue enough in their mutual attachment to miſlead them into an opinion that it could never be culpable. With the humility which is the grace of our religious profeſſion, Joanna prayed that temptation might not be added to her liſt of ſufferings; and taking part of the paper his lordſhip's letter was written on, ſhe was beginning to write a requeſt to diſpenſe with his viſit, when the woman of the houſe again entered, and introduced Lord Armathwaite. Joanna endeavoured to combat her extreme perturbation, and dropping into a chair in ſilence, and with looks averted to hide her emotion, ſcarcely heard his re-iterated profeſſions of ſurpriſe and attachment. She could not aſk him, nor did he tell her, how he had gained intelligence of her: his reſentment towards Mr. Byram, and his concern for Joanna's immediate ſufferings wholly occupied him.

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A torrent of tears, ill calculated to confirm her lover's heart to its duties, and ſteel it againſt her perſonal attractions, were the prelude to her voice. She begged to be left to the fate Heaven ſeemed to have decreed for her: ſhe repreſented the change that had taken place in their ſituations as an inſurmountable obſtacle to any aſſiſtance ſhe could receive from him, and ſhe lamented as an added misfortune, that chance which had brought him to the knowledge of her exiſtence.

Lord Armathwaite tried to calm and re aſſure her: he expreſſed his pity for her, and his reſpect for the ſituation ſhe had made her choice. To give her time to recover, he would have careſſed her child, who with the earneſtneſs of its babyhood, was playing with its fingers in the cradle; but ſome ſentiment not to be defined, excited Joanna's abhorrence of his lordſhip's fondneſs: ſhe ſcarcely herſelf knew why ſhe removed the child to a diſ-

a diſtance from him, and tried to exclude him even from the ſight of it.

She grew more compoſed: ſhe wiſhed to know who had told him ſhe was in diſtreſs: he ſtill ſeemed deſirous of ſeeing more of the child; ſhe again ſtrove to prevent it, and rang the bell to requeſt the miſtreſs of the houſe to take the charge of it during his viſit—the ſummons was anſwered by her own ſervant who had ſo abruptly left her! Joanna ſtarted with ſurpriſe, and queſtioning her as to her ſudden return, was anſwered by Lord Armathwaite, who declared himſelf indebted to this ſimple girl for the tidings he had received. With tears of fidelity and many apologies for the liberty ſhe had taken, ſhe confeſſed to her miſtreſs that, fearing her melancholy would kill her, and knowing enough from what ſhe had told her, to believe Lord Armathwaite the only friend ſhe could depend on, ſhe had wiſhed to make him

acquainted

acquainted with her ſituation: but that being unable to write, and unwilling to truſt any but herſelf, ſhe had demanded her diſmiſſion that ſhe might have money ſufficient to pay her expences, and had gone to Lord Armathwaite's houſe near Reading. She added that her dear miſtreſs needed to be under no fear from any thing ſhe might have ſaid amongſt her own friends; for that ſhe had carefully avoided ſeeing any one who knew her.

In the extreme, though perhaps injudicious benevolence of the action, all ſenſe of relative ſituation was effaced from Joanna's mind, and throwing her arms round the neck of her frighted maid, ſhe with tears expreſſed her obligation. She felt not quite the forlorn creature ſhe had fancied herſelf but a few minutes before. She committed Elizabeth to the girl's care, and with tolerable ſteadineſs, entered into converſation with Lord Armathwaite, who

was

was bent on a public appeal to juſtice againſt Mr. Byram; but to this Joanna would on no account conſent: ſhe founded her objections on regard for Lady Jemima, and her reſentment of the ill treatment ſhe had received from the man to whom legal meaſures muſt, if ſucceſsful, unite her again; and ſhe declared her poſitive reſolution never to lend even the countenance of her name to them. She thought it was not impoſſible that ſhe might procure from Mr. Byram the proviſion he had offered her; and could ſhe find her old friend Mrs. Halnaby, the utmoſt of her wiſhes would be to retire to her protection.

"But would you not conſent to a previous divorce, if it could be obtained—a diſſolution of your marriage if it could be effected?" ſaid Lord Armathwaite with an energy that ſeemed too much like a wiſh at leaſt to reduce obſtacles.

"By

" By no means," replied Joanna—" I will do nothing to injure my little girl in the eye of the world. If ſhe is known only as my daughter, it may be ſuppoſed her father died in her infancy; but if ſhe becomes an object of diſpute, the impediments to her being reſpectable, will be greater than ſhe may be able to encounter, when barbarity and the grave have left her an orphan."

" Do not talk ſo," ſaid his lordſhip: " neither you, my Joanna, nor your child ſhall ever want the aids of a huſband or a parent. I can ſurely protect you while I live; and galling as is my ſituation, I will redouble my aſſiduities towards a woman, whom but for your ſake I hate, that ſhe may leave me what will ſecure you when I ceaſe to exiſt. Long I cannot endure the tortures I am doomed to bear, which every day are rendered ſharper—Is it not enough that I have loſt you? that I am doomed to be the ſlave of age accompanied

nied with whatever can render it contemptible and diſguſting? but muſt I ſee you wretched? and even I—I be the author of your wretchedneſs?—it is *my* ſiſter who has been your bane.—To humor her I have forwarded the marriage; and if there is a being you would curſe, in juſtice, it is myſelf.—Believe me, my Joanna; for I cannot hide my heart; I have heaped miſeries on my head, not to ſerve myſelf, but thoſe I thought you loved.—I could not juſtify to my conſcience the ſeeing a fellow-creature doom himſelf by ſuicide to perdition, while I had the means for his reſcue in my power; but, ſtill, my Joanna, I am the ſame you once knew me: I believe I have been weak—perhaps it was not incumbent on me to riſque ſo much—the event makes me think myſelf wrong; for you are involved in my miſery, and I have not the power to extricate you. Would you but conſent to the annulling your marriage, I could place you in quiet ſecurity, where I might

might have at leaſt the ſtolen happineſs of viſiting and comforting you till the courſe of a few years ſhould have liberated me, when I would ratify all our vows, and be the guardian of your future peace."

This was the language Joanna dreaded to hear; and ſhe ſaw Lord Armathwaite's deception of himſelf, in fancying he could thus exerciſe his benevolence uninfluenced by paſſion. She was convinced that his protection was not to be accepted; and foreſeeing that ſhe muſt deny herſelf a ſecond interview with him, ſhe endeavoured to turn his thoughts, and to ſerve herſelf, by enquiring after her former friends.

She learnt that Mrs. Rufford had found compaſſion amongſt the pariſhioners of her late huſband, that his creditors had ſuffered her to avail herſelf of the benefits of a ſale of his effects, which had produced her a ſum adequate to the purchaſe of a ſmall annuity, which added to

the charitable bounty allowed to her as related to the church, would enable her to live exempt from penury; and that ſhe was gone to London with her daughter. Mrs. Halnaby, ſhe had the conſolation of hearing, was relieved by the death of her worthleſs ſon, from the ruin he had prepared for her. She was then in France, where ſhe meant to continue for the remainder of her life, or till her frugality ſhould have retrieved her circumſtances. Joanna was comforted by hearing that Mrs. Halnaby correſponded regularly with Lord Armathwaite, and never omitted her hopeleſs enquiries after her unfortunate favourite, whom the malice of the Ruffords had induſtriouſly repreſented as a prodigy of every ſpecies of iniquity.

CHAP. XVI.

Lord Armathwaite prolonged his viſit till Joanna began to fear he had loſt the fortitude that ſhould have enabled him to quit her. He indulged in unavailing repetitions of blaſted hopes, and cruel diſappointments: he fed his fancy by portraits of miſery, and ſunk into diſtraction of thought. Joanna had expreſſed her ſenſe of his friendſhip as far as her prudence warranted: ſhe had promiſed to conſult him in whatever ſteps ſhe ſhould take; and, to give him courage, affected it herſelf; but no implied adieu had any effect on her lover. He remained ſilent: he then begged to ſee Elizabeth; the child was now aſleep, and ſhe refuſed to diſturb her. She was driven to the neceſſity of requeſting him ſo far to conſult her eaſe, as

to leave her. She bid him conſider what appearance ſo unſeaſonable a viſit muſt have in the eyes of thoſe in the houſe. He talked wildly and contemptuouſly of the world and its opinions; he reverted to his unalterable paſſion for her; he tried to make a reciprocal declaration of conſtancy on her part the price of his withdrawing: ——ſhe aſſured him of her friendſhip and eſteem, while he acquieſced in her plans, and conformed to her ſenſe of decorum. At length he went away; but it was madly, and not till he had made her promiſe to reſort to him in all emergencies.

If the day had been productive of perturbation, it had in ſome meaſure atoned for it, by the good it had produced, in the return of her ſervant, whom ſhe now valued more than ever, and in the opportunity Lord Armathwaite's viſit had given her of opening a communication with Mrs. Halnaby; and ſhe retired to reſt grateful for theſe comforts. But neither the paſt

nor

nor the future, however fertile the one had been in ſorrows, or however barren the other ſeemed of hope, could ſo occupy her thoughts, as to exclude her own almoſt natural ſentiments for Lord Armathwaite. To her love and eſteem was now added, not only her pity, but her anxious fear leſt the conſtancy of his paſſion for her ſhould add to the wreck of all his worldly happineſs, that of his intellects. She dreaded, leſt human fortitude ſhould not be able to ſupport wounds never ſuffered to heal, but which hourly cruelty made rankle afreſh; ſhe feared too, leſt the human heart could not be ſo nicely balanced as not to lean to the ſide of frailty:——ſhe feared ſhe muſt not truſt him.

The obvious probability of his returning had not ſtruck her recollection; when, on her leaving her chamber the next morning, to dreſs her child by the only fire ſhe allowed herſelf, ſhe found him ſitting in the room they had parted in the preceding

evening. He excuſed his intruſion by the recollection of a particular matter, on which he wiſhed to ſpeak to her. It was a deſire to find out, from her converſation, what degree of affection ſhe had ever borne towards the man ſhe had married, that was moſt evident in his queſtions. She anſwered him without diſguiſe. He did not ſeem cheered by the command ſhe had held over her heart; but he commended, with the ingenuouſneſs of honeſt praiſe, her inflexible integrity.

She talked with leſs embarraſſment than the preceding evening, and ſeemed to gain an aſcendancy over his mind by the candour of her own. The ſame averſion to his attention to her child exiſted in her feelings: ſhe covered it up, and nurſed it to ſleep again. He was again as curious, and deſiſted only that he might not give her pain, when he ſaw that her tears accompanied her refuſal.

He

He replied to her fearful cautions againſt viſiting her, by aſſuring her he was on the point of returning home; and promiſed, if ſhe would write daily to him, and receive his letters as often, while ſhe remained in difficulties, that he would never viſit her but at her requeſt. At parting he was again perturbed, and incoherent; but his reaſon was victorious, and Joanna's mind was relieved.

Her firſt occupation, when ſhe had, with an aching heart, watched him to the corner of the row ſhe lived in, was to write to Mrs. Halnaby a full account of herſelf.—She enjoined her friend ſecreſy, and entreated her to put her in ſome way of coming to her. Her ſpirits were a little relieved by theſe events, and ſhe gained ſtrength while ſhe waited Mrs. Halnaby's reply.

The conduct of the woman with whom ſhe lodged, in a few days, gave her freſh

uneaſineſs. She had heard a violent contention between her and her faithful maid-ſervant, which ended in a viſit from the former, who began a very ſtately diſcourſe, by inſinuations which gave her to underſtand ſhe had not much credit of character with her. The delicacy of the good lady had not been hurt by a ſuppoſition, it appeared ſhe had hitherto maintained, that Joanna was merely the *protegée*, and not the wife, of Mr. Byram; but the viſit from Lord Armathwaite, whoſe name had been kept ſecret from her, had raiſed her curioſity and ſuſpicion, which had been confirmed by the maid-ſervant's paying for ſome trifling articles with a bank note, undoubtedly, in the landlady's opinion, the bounty of the ſtrange gentleman: and ſo, indeed, it was, though unknown to Joanna. He knew the miſtreſs too well to offer her money; he knew her diſtreſſes too well to leave her without ſuch ſuccour; he had therefore depoſited it with the ſervant;

vant; and Joanna had not obſerved that ſhe had not been called on for money.

She endeavoured to clear herſelf of the laſt ſuſpicion, by expreſſing her abhorrence of the former; but the old lady knew the world too well to be credulous, and was growing rather too free in her cenſures; till Joanna, with a degree of ſpirit ſhe did not expect from a lady ſo circumſtanced, threatened to quit her houſe. She then cooled, retracted, apologized, and ſidled out of the room.

No more was heard of this matter. A brief letter came from Mr. Byram, incloſing the papers neceſſary to putting Joanna in poſſeſſion of the thouſand pounds he had promiſed her; and the ſame poſt brought her a much more welcome return from Mrs. Halnaby, in which, with all the tenderneſs of a parent, ſhe expreſſed her ſympathy in her ſufferings, and encouraged

her to bear up under them. She acquieſced both in her wiſh to leave Byram unmoleſted, and in that ſhe had formed of coming to live near her, which ſhe hoped to be able in a very few months to gratify her in, as ſhe was taking meaſures for returning to England, though not to her former ſituation. She had a houſe, in a moſt ſecluded ſituation, at Chartham, in Kent: it was preparing for her; and there ſhe conjured her dear Joanna to meet her, and fix her abode, with her infant and her benevolent ſervant. She farther inſiſted on her exonerating the perfidious Lambert from all charge reſpecting her, and promiſed, on this condition, to conſider her wholly as her daughter.

The contents of this letter ſeemed more than to repay all Joanna's previous ſufferings; and in her correſpondence with this kind friend and Lord Armathwaite, ſhe beguiled the weeks of waiting. His

lord-

lordſhip's letter confirmed her in the propriety of her caution: they diſplayed the moſt honeſt heart, the warmeſt charity;—but the ſpirit of fervent love was prevalent in them: he himſelf felt the neceſſity of abſence, and his reaſon aided his morality.

CHAP. XVII.

THE time for Mrs. Halnaby's return drew near; the day was fixed, and no new diſaſter had recurred to diſturb the almoſt placid Joanna. She looked forward to the future, if not with joy or hope, yet without the agonies of incertitude. She endeavoured to conſider herſelf as a widow returning to an affectionate parent; and in the rearing her promiſing little girl, ſhe ſaw ſome compenſation of pleaſure for the anxieties ſhe had on her account endured.

She had remained in this amended ſituation nearly three months, when ſhe was a little alarmed by perceiving a degree of goſſiping intimacy between Nelly and a young man who appeared to be a lodger at an oppoſite houſe. She queſtioned the girl

girl on the ſubject, and learnt that their new neighbour was a relation of the woman he lodged with, who was *a very good ſort of woman*, and that he was received by Nelly in quality of a lover. She ſeemed perfectly informed of every circumſtance reſpecting his ſtation and proſpects in the world, and ſet him forth as endued with all the virtues of humble life. He was, Nelly ſaid, the ſon of a ſubſtantial farmer: he himſelf was journeyman to a conſiderable dealer in London, the air of which place not agreeing with him, he had left his ſituation, was come to this village to regain his health, and propoſed ſettling in his own country (Ireland) in his father's occupation. Nelly confeſſed that ſhe had told him her miſtreſs's plan of retiring into Kent, which ſeemed exactly to ſuit his wiſhes; and, that he might not remove her from a miſtreſs ſhe was ſo attached to, he promiſed, if ſhe would conſent to marry him, that he would give up his Hibernian ſcheme, and, as he was ſure he could,

find

find a farm at Chartham that would ſuit them.

Joanna was too benevolent not to enter with pleaſure into a plan that ſeemed to inſure the happineſs of two deſerving young people. The man appeared deſirous of recommending himſelf to her good opinion; and, as he was out of all employment, would frequently amuſe himſelf by nurſing the little Elizabeth, and giving her that exerciſe which her thriving conſtitution and increaſing weight made fatiguing to Nelly. He would often walk out with the child, and ſhewed ſo much care and tenderneſs, that Joanna had no fear, till one day he remained out ſo much longer than uſual, that ſhe began to apprehend the little girl might ſuffer. She, however, waited patiently, as long as ſhe could ſuppoſe him only indiſcreet. She then went out herſelf; but not ſeeing him near the houſe, ſhe returned, declared her fears, and ſent Nelly to ſeek him. Nelly

came

came back with all the marks of terror in her countenance, for her ſearch had not availed. Every one who could be engaged in the ſervice was then diſpatched to make enquiries; but all in vain. Joanna could ſupport her hopes no longer: ſhe was ſcarcely in her ſenſes. All night ſhe waited the tidings of meſſengers ſent different ways; no means were left untried to make her loſs public; but in three days ſhe ceaſed to hope!

She could not believe that the child was ſtolen on the common motives of plunder, for the man's abode in the neighbourhood ſeemed a concerted buſineſs, and connected with ſome ſcheme; but the candour and concern of the woman he had lodged with acquitted her to Joanna's inexperience. The firſt regular ſuſpicion ſhe entertained was, that Lord Armathwaite, out of fondneſs and a deſire againſt her will to do her good, had taken the child, with a view to bring it up with ſuperior advantages.

tages. Without ſtaying to inveſtigate the reaſonableneſs of her conjecture, ſhe wrote to him on this ſuppoſition. His anſwer acquitted him; but he ſuggeſted the probability of Byram's being the perſon; and though he had broken off all intercourſe with him, and conſequently with his ſiſter, he offered to go to him in the north of Ireland, where he now was, on an eſtate called Balla-craig, which his father had given him. His lordſhip, deeply as he felt Joanna's diſtreſs, could not but make it ſubſervient to his own paſſion: he begged permiſſion to come to her, as the beſt means of being ſerviceable to her in her ſearch.

Joanna's feelings, tortured thus by the moſt excruciating ſuſpenſe, could ſcarcely ſupport the delay of the poſt; and when Lord Armathwaite's letter arrived, it ſerved only to deject her entirely. She had almoſt hoped it was he who had been guilty of this pious fraud: ſhe could not believe

lieve Byram was enough intereſted in the fate of perſons he had ſo cruelly neglected, to rob her with a good intention; for an evil one there was no room: the little Elizabeth could have no claims on him that it could be worth his trouble to ſuppreſs by violent means. Joanna would not, however, ſuffer her own judgment to preclude her from even the leaſt ray of hope. She wrote to him briefly, but energetically; ſhe believed that the loſs of her infant would put a period to her earthly ſufferings; ſhe only begged to be aſcertained of its fate.

She had had no power to reply to Lord Armathwaite's requeſt; he therefore conſtrued her ſilence to his advantage, came to town, and ſaw her twice every day.—His kindneſs, in a ſmall degree, ſoothed her; and ſhe endured with patient reſignation the tedious paſſage of the days that muſt elapſe before ſhe could hear from Ireland.

Her

Her ſervant bore not ſo well a misfortune ſhe conſidered herſelf as having cauſed. Nelly was utterly incapacitated, by her violent ſorrow, from attending on her miſtreſs; and Lord Armathwaite found a handſome bribe neceſſary to excite the miſtreſs of the houſe to aſſiſt in her ſtead.—He left nothing undone that the tendereſt affection could dictate for the eaſe of the wretched Joanna; but there was a ſacredneſs in her grief that ſupplied the want of caution on her part; and the moſt ſcrupulous reſerve could not have imputed any thing to his friendſhip inconſiſtent with an affection truly fraternal.

At the expiration of a week from the time of her having written to Byram, ſhe had an unexpected viſit from Mrs. Halnaby, who, not aware of her diſtreſſes, but anxious to abridge the time of their ſeparation, had made a journey to London on purpoſe to remove her to her new abode at Chartham. This kind friend had now no

no wiſh but to promote Joanna's comforts; ſhe participated all her ſufferings, and determined to wait with her the arrival of Byram's anſwer:——it came as ſoon as could be expected, and was to this purport:—

" I cannot ſo far diſmiſs you from my regard, as to with-hold any conſolation in my power. I confeſs, when I look at my own conduct, I have no right to blame your's; but it is unfit your child ſhould remain with you;—it is I who have taken her from you——ſhe muſt never know you for her mother, nor me for her father; but, truſt me, ſhe ſhall meet with every care ſhe requires. While I am kind to her, I ſhould reſent any attempt on your part to interfere; I would then caſt her off; but if you will remain quiet, and endeavour to forget her and me, ſhe ſhall have no cauſe to complain of

" Your's, &c.

" L. B."

Joanna's

Joanna's fears were alleviated, but her regrets were, if poſſible, more pungent, and ſhe bewailed her loſt infant as conſigned to the grave. As nothing could induce her to appeal to the law againſt the injuſtice ſhe ſuffered under, her friends could preach nothing but ſubmiſſion. Mrs. Halnaby removed her to Chartham, and Lord Armathwaite returned diſconſolate to his melancholy abode. Previous to her departure, Joanna wrote again to Byram. She declared herſelf at a loſs to diſcover what it was in her conduct that demanded the ſtyle of pardon he aſſumed; ſhe profeſſed her ſubmiſſive intentions; ſhe requeſted that he would, occaſionally, give her the pleaſure of knowing Elizabeth was in health; and telling him how ſhe was aided by Mrs. Halnaby's kindneſs, ſhe declined all further remittances from him. This gentle return to ſuch cruel uſage was dictated equally by reſignation of mind and politic regard for her daughter, for whoſe

whoſe ſake ſhe could have borne patiently any infliction.

As ſoon as the conſequences of her ſorrow were ſufficiently removed to allow her to undertake the journey, Mrs. Halnaby conducted her melancholy charge to her humble dwelling in Kent. The beautiful ſcenery of this part of the country ſoon attached both of them to it. Mrs. Halnaby's finances, though they admitted not of the port ſhe had lived in while in Berkſhire, afforded her every neceſſary gratification and convenience. She had been well educated, and was herſelf by nature, and by the diſcipline her mind had undergone, in a world that had been very ſtormy to her, rendered a fit comforter for her beloved Joanna, whom ſhe conſidered as her adopted daughter. She directed her to look for conſolation where ſhe herſelf had never failed to find it under all diſtreſſes——in an integrity of mind, and a reliance on the providential bounty of heaven.

ven. She intereſted her in the attainment of whatever could be uſeful or of advantage to her in the ſituation of her heir; and the ſmall taſte Joanna had had, while under the tyranny of the Ruffords, of the pleaſures to be derived from intellectual purſuits, aided the ſtimulus of Mrs. Halnaby's wiſhes. To exclude her greateſt enemy, reflection, ſhe eagerly engaged herſelf in elegant attainments, till that which had been a ſpecies of ſalutary delirium became, in time, habit, and the general tenor of her mind; and though vivacity, and even chearfulneſs, could never again enter her heart, ſhe was placid, and grateful.

So long a ſpace of time had elapſed without her hearing of her child, or of Byram, any otherwiſe than by pompous communications in the papers of the increaſe of Lady Jemima's nurſery, that ſhe feared he would not indulge her as ſhe had requeſted.—— She wrote again, moſt humbly; but no anſwer

anſwer was returned. Lord Armathwaite wrote, but with no better ſucceſs; and, aware of the ſavageneſs of Byram's temper when provoked, ſhe deſiſted.

Thus paſſed days, weeks, months, years. ——Mrs. Halnaby and Joanna were ſo much charmed with Kent, and the picturesque beauties around them, that, when Mrs. Halnaby's œconomy had reſtored her circumſtances, and Lord Armathwaite's leaſe was out, they ſtill declined a change of ſituation.

Lady Armathwaite lived about nine years after this period, and, with unexpected liberality, rewarded her huſband's irreproachable conduct towards her, by a bequeſt of all ſhe poſſeſſed. He was now at liberty, and in a ſtate of ſuperior affluence; but he was miſerable; for Joanna, though ſtill conſtant in her attachment to him, and urged both by him and her friend to take a legal opinion on the point

of

of annulling her marriage, was too ſcrupulous, and too compleatly diſguſted with the idea of a freſh ſearch after happineſs, to ſuffer any ſtep towards this end to be taken. His lordſhip, therefore, finding the quiet of home unfriendly to him, intereſted himſelf in the buſtle of army politics; and procuring a military appointment, went abroad; keeping up a regular correſpondence with Mrs. Halnaby and Joanna.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE conduct of Byram requires an explanation, beſt given by an inveſtigation of his motives, and a detail of the events which were to reward him for the painful renunciation of his wayward heart's firſt poſſeſſions—a renunciation ſtill more infamous than galling, and rendered ſtill more criminal by the reluctance his very nature felt in making it.

His inertneſs of mind had firſt made him capricious in his ſituation as a huſband and a father. He had not that ſpirit of induſtry which converts buſineſs into pleaſure; his heart was not good enough to preſent to his imagination, as rewards, thoſe for whom he ought to have laboured: to procure relief from *ennui*, he was expenſive; as ſoon as poverty threat-

ened, he grew, not vigilant, but ſullen : he ſought pleaſures ſtill more obliterating than the common diſſipations of life : theſe rendered inſipid all the calm enjoyments of home, and detached his affections from its inhabitants. He became firſt deſperate, then cruel; and conſidering his juvenile paſſion for Joanna Doveridge as the cauſe of all his embarraſſments, his reſentment fell upon her. The temptation his father had held out to him when he offered him not only an emancipation from his debts, but a ſtate of affluence, on the ſole condition of marrying Lady Jemima Fawley, was too ſtrong for his unprincipled mind, now that its tie to Joanna was broken; for Lambert's conſcience needed not only the fear of puniſhment on the one hand to deter it from ill, but the bribe of a reward on the other, to allure it to what was good ; and when left to itſelf, it yielded to the firſt proffered convenience. By ſtudying the characters of thoſe ſummer

birds,

birds, women of faſhion, he learnt to correct his judgment, which ſoon convinced him that Joanna, however amiable, was a weariſome piece of ſtill life, and that vivacity and volatility, as they were natural, were highly becoming to women.

Lord Armathwaite paid with his ſiſter's fortune the laſt thouſand pounds of his own property. Lady Jemima who with all her frivolity, did not want for ſelf-love, foreſaw in Byram's deficiency of prompt affection for her, frequent uneaſineſſes, when thoſe expences ſhe meant to indulge in without meaſure, ſhould come under his cogniſance. She therefore prevailed on his beſotted father, not only to make all neceſſary arrangements, in caſe a ſeparation ſhould ſuit their tempers better than union; but to allot her a diſtinct purſe, over which her huſband ſhould have no controul: it was to conſiſt of a ſpecific ſum in the funds, of which the principal and intereſt were to be wholly her own,

both as to temporary enjoyment and future diſpoſition, out of which ſhe was to furniſh her equipage, all her perſonal expences and *menus plaiſirs*. In ſhort, it was ſo contrived as that her ladyſhip might partake all the benefits of her huſband's fortune, and add every extravagance this ſeparate dower could afford. The ſequel will ſhew her ſagacity.

In Byram's character, in his verſatility of affection, which was ſwayed wholly by his intereſts; and in the prophetic negligence with which he began to treat his new wife, almoſt as ſoon as he was married to her, Lord Armathwaite ſaw ſo much to dread, that he thought the only method to avoid an open rupture, was by ceaſing to be an obſerver of his behaviour. He imputed that to Byram as decided turpitude, which perhaps was the laſt ſpark of expiring virtue, and when perhaps his benumbed conſcience felt the pungent tooth

of

of remorſe, he ſeemed the leaſt alive to human affections.

Her ladyſhip, not a whit more amiable or more honeſt, no ſooner felt herſelf in poſſeſſion of wealth, and the title of matrimony, than ſhe quarrelled with her brother, for adviſing her to be cautious, provoked her huſband's father by openly laughing at him for his infirmities, and rendered Byram ridiculous, by declaring her reſolution and her power of governing him.

A very few weeks, a very few hours of cloying diſſipation, which forces the mind back upon itſelf, made Lambert think ſeriouſly of his conduct, and wiſh himſelf almoſt in the embarraſſed ſituation he had plunged from. To extricate himſelf was impoſſible: to bear what he ſuffered daily from his wife and his conſcience, was almoſt as difficult, and he was aſhamed to confeſs to any one the nefarious part he

had acted: he had no hope of mitigating the agonies of his mind, but by an endeavour to awaken the compaſſion of Joanna: he flattered himſelf that could he procure a ſeparation from Lady Jemima, which he did not doubt, if he once provoked her, he might prevail on his former wife to remain in a ſtate of obſcure marriage, in which he meant to afford her every comfort conſiſtent with ſecrecy, and to indulge himſelf as much as poſſible in her ſociety.

Not daring to truſt this important commiſſion to paper, he quitted Ireland, and came privately to Joanna's lodgings ſhortly after Lord Armathwaite had found her. The officious woman of the houſe believing Joanna no otherwiſe a wife than by conſent, informed him of his lordſhip's viſits and the conſequent circumſtances which with all neceſſary details of connection ſhe had artfully obtained from Nelly. Lambert's mind was wounded: he forbore

bore ſeeing Joanna, who was out with her maid and child, and returned home diſappointed.

Deſtitute of every comfort, while he enjoyed in their fulleſt extent all the gratifications, he had ſo dearly purchaſed, he turned his aching thoughts towards the little Elizabeth: he wiſhed her near him, and removed from a mother whom he conſidered himſelf as having rendered faulty: as he knew perſuaſion would have no effect, he took the violent means of ſtealing the infant, and introducing it to Lady Jemima as the offſpring of a juvenile amour; her ladyſhip neither nice nor affectionate, declared he might do what he would with the brat, provided ſhe was not troubled with it: he therefore had it nurſed at the country houſe, and found ſome conſolation in ſtealing down to weep over it.

Byram judged as ill of Lady Jemima, if he ſuppoſed ſhe would be a torment increaſing in proportion to the lapſe of time, as he did of himſelf when he firſt believed he could be ſteady in his love for Joanna, or happy when he had abandoned her. Her ladyſhip's temper and opinion were as variable as her faſhions; and neither of them in general laſted long enough to ſtay for criticiſm. She was not yet malignant: her mind never reſted ſufficiently to ruſt on a ſubject; ſhe had but one purſuit, and that was pleaſure or rather *envy*, which ſhe courted with avidity. To dazzle, to overpower, to mortify, were Lady Jemima's joys. To an unobſerving eye ſhe had all the evil attributes of an evil diſpoſition; but her character was, at preſent, too negative for theſe determinate features: her mind was in a perpetual whirl of childiſh purſuit; ſhe had rather not time for virtue, than any poſitive vice in her compoſition.

At

At the close of the first year, she brought a daughter, and Byram who fancied her humour rather mended in the last three months, waited for the dawnings of that maternal love which had once so endeared Joanna to him; but he waited in vain: the child was sent to a cabin to be nurst, because some of the most dissipated ladies of fashion in Dublin had found this method of exonerating their arms, answer without injury to their consciences; the unimpeded atmosphere and rustic diet of the peasantry, having proved beneficial to the young charge. Byram's capricious heart was now so fixed on his Elizabeth, that he suffered Lady Jemima to please herself in this particular. Indulgence had a good effect: she was surprized and pleased with the perfect power she enjoyed: having nothing to oppose her, she became good humoured; and the liberality of Byram's father which put him in possession of as large an income as most commoners in Ireland enjoyed,

ſeemed completely to fix her a gay and agreeable woman. Her huſband was not proof againſt the faſcinations of her vivacity: he left his Elizabeth without agonizing regret to the care of her nurſe, and betook himſelf with Lady Jemima to Dublin, in the diſſipations of which place he ſeemed to loſe all diſtreſſing remembrances: he took a leading part in politics, became a diſtinguiſhed character in parliament, while his lady at the caſtle outblazed all who had leſs money or more good ſenſe: from Dublin they made an excurſion to London, where another daughter was born, and put out to nurſe: two years nearly elapſed before they reviſited Ireland; and almoſt another before their ſeat at Balla-craig had any allurements for them.

At length Byram, half ſurfeited with heaping pleaſures to ſtifle reflection, returned home, in expectation of the novel though melancholy joy of ſeeing his little

tle girl grown, and improved in infant powers. She had been ſo little noticed by her ladyſhip, that it would have been preſumption to obtrude her on her ſight; but ſhe was carried into a diſtant apartment, where her father ſtill alive to ſentiments of affection for her, with rapture ſaw in her every promiſe that could juſtify his love, or repay him in future for the anxiety her education, under ſuch adverſe circumſtances, muſt coſt him. She was pretty, ſhe ſhewed ſigns of a good underſtanding, of affection and gratitude, and by a tranſient look, ſhe now and then to his joy and puniſhment, brought her mother to his remembrance.

In a houſe ſpacious and detached as his was, it was no difficult matter to procure her every advantage of tuition, and keep her from giving offence to Lady Jemima, whom ſhe was ſedulouſly inſtructed to treat with the utmoſt deference. Her ladyſhip, in the improvement

of her temper, ſeemed to have acquired ſome degrees of humanity towards the unhappy child; and would ſometimes condeſcend to ſpeak kindly to her and to careſs her: this good diſpoſition was encouraged by the bewitching blandiſhment of her age, her beauty and her helpleſſneſs; and Lady Jemima began to fancy herſelf ſo extremely fond of children, that ſhe reſolved on having the two Miſs Byrams home, and placing them together with Elizabeth, under the ſame governeſs. This ſcheme met, not only with Byram's aſſent, but demanded his gratitude. It was carried, with her ladyſhip's uſual velocity, into execution, and Elizabeth began her ſtudies with her two half ſiſters; but ſhe had unfortunately advantages in the affection of her father, and the governeſs recommended to Lady Jemima, which the total inattention in which the more fortunate young ladies had been reared, together with their inferiority of age, denied them: Elizabeth could

read,

read, when neither Miſs Byram, nor Miſs Arabella knew their alphabet. She was their ſuperior in beauty and intellectual endowments, and the eldeſt having, through the inadvertence of her nurſe, had a fall which was never confeſſed, but which ſhewed itſelf in an obliquity of ſhape, there was little hope of her taking her place as the eldeſt heireſs of ſo illuſtrious a family, with that *eclat* which would gratify her mother's ambition, or obſcure the merit of her humble competitor. Lady Jemima ſaw and felt all theſe untoward diſadvantages: they vexed her; ſhe had too much ſelf-love to diſlike her own girls, for their want of recommendations: ſhe therefore began to hate poor Elizabeth for ſhewing her by ſo ſtriking a compariſon, how little power ſhe had over Nature's bounty: and Byram perceiving the change, would have removed his darling daughter: but this he ſoon found would be to make Lady Jemima her open enemy. He therefore ſubmitted to hear her contume-

lioufly

liouſly ſpoken of, and to ſee her moſt unjuſtly decided againſt, in all queſtions of right amongſt the children, endeavouring in private, and by every kindneſs that could ſoothe her, to repay her for her ſufferings. She was meek and forgiving: ſhe had always been taught to look up to the Miſs Byrams as infinitely exalted above *Elizabeth*, which was the only name ſhe knew herſelf by: ſhe thus leſſened all their triumphs by her patience; and frequently by allowing them to go to the moſt abſurd extremities of malice, ſhe defeated their purpoſes of bringing imputations on her, and rendered their actions the evidence of her innocence.

It was however impoſſible for her to lead a comfortable, or even a quiet life, while the young ladies had her within their reach; but they were occaſionally removed to Dublin or London, with their mamma, whom a ſpirit of oppoſition led for a ſhort time to take the moſt aſſiduous

care

care of their education. She grew diſcontented with the governeſs, and while therefore they were receiving inſtructions from maſters ill choſen but profuſely paid, Elizabeth was happy in the care of a ſenſible woman, who foſtered every virtue and every elegance of her mind, and rendered her at fourteen, one of the moſt accompliſhed girls of her age.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

LADY Jemima had, long before this period, grown weary of the houſe in the north; or rather the compariſon between Elizabeth and her daughters had become intolerable. She therefore remained in Dublin, or varied the ſcene by a viſit to England, leaving her daughters, whom ſhe could not introduce without appearing older than ſhe liked to be thought, under the care of bad ſervants and negligent teachers; for her fervor of education was ſoon cooled, and her patience wearied in the courſe of a very few years, which diſcovered to her, that correction produced ſullenneſs; flattery, conceit; and zeal, oppoſition; as often as ſhe addreſſed herſelf to the rational faculties of her hopeful progeny.

Her

Her ladyſhip's factitious ſtock of perſonal attractions giving way as ſoon as the ſeaſon of youth was over, her mind was now occupied in the repair of her charms; and envious of the younger beauties ſhe ſaw ſpringing up, ſhe ſought the repair of her vivacity, and the attention of the gay, by a ſort of flirtation which required little heart, and great addreſs, to keep it within the bounds of innocence. Byram ſaw her conduct without concern; for he had ceaſed to be intereſted in any thing reſpecting her, and in their mutual caprice they had become mutually indifferent; but he could not always be deaf to what was ſaid of her extreme gaiety, nor to his father's remonſtrances on the reports of her light conduct: he therefore changing his plan, ſpent moſt of his time in the north, much to the advantage and delight of his promiſing daughter. Many uneaſy hours his reflections on his own conduct, on that which he too lightly ſuppoſed to have been her mother's, and on her future fate, coſt him.

him. He had as yet, nothing but a yearly income, derived from his father's liberality: it was abundant in itſelf; but Lady Jemima could have ſpent the revenue of a monarch, and ſeldom left him a ſuperfluity: he could neither transfer, in caſe he had an opportunity of ſettling Elizabeth, nor bequeath, in caſe of his own death. How he ſhould introduce her to the world, and procure her any friend but himſelf, he was at a loſs to determine.

It was death to him to think of a ſeparation from her; yet to keep her in a ſituation, which bad roads, a country not at all populous, and her want of protection muſt often render a ſolitude, was not an eligible plan to promote her happineſs. Sometimes he thought of endeavouring to trace her mother, and committing her to her charge; but ſhame, fear, love, every thing oppoſed this meaſure; and he ſuffered year after year to find Elizabeth improved in every thing, but that eſſential requiſite to life, knowledge of the world.

She,

She, on her part, felt not unfrequently a wiſh for ſociety. She had heard from the un-child-like Miſs Byrams accounts of the metropolis of each kingdom, that made her curious; and when the buſtle which Lady Jemima, her retinue, and her company always occaſioned, while they reſided there, was ſucceeded by the undiſturbed quiet and the ecchoing emptineſs of the houſe, ſhe could not always repreſs a ſigh of regret and diſcontent. A few days, however, generally convinced her that the abſence of the young ladies was, at any rate, a bleſſing: ſhe called herſelf childiſh for admitting ſuch regrets, and ungrateful to her father for being diſcontented, when he was ſo liberal, and ſhe had ſo little claim on him. She endeavoured by induſtry to exclude idle wiſhes, and to render herſelf worthy of the bleſſings ſhe enjoyed. What ſhe read convinced her, that to eſcape the evils of life is to be poſitively happy: ſhe ſaw herſelf in peace, ſafety, affluence and health; and her ſerious turn of mind

taught

taught her, that to admit the ill qualities of temper, was at once to poiſon all preſent enjoyment, and to give up all claim to future comfort.

The perſon who had educated her was well formed to teach one whoſe fate was uncertain; for ſhe had been ſchooled in the ſharpeſt diſcipline of adverſity. She was well born, and had all the elegance of true gentility about her: ſhe had been, in her youth, credulous and ſuſceptible, had conducted herſelf with integrity and prudence, and had renounced her inclinations to adhere to her duty. She had ſeen the world in its deluſions; ſhe had ſeen it without its maſk: ſhe did not teach her pupil that it was a path wholly compoſed either of briars or roſes; but ſhe told her how the one might be converted into the other. She knew the intrinſic worth of what are called accompliſhments: ſhe conſidered them as uſeful and neceſſary to a reſpectable appearance in the world; but

ſtill

ſtill more valuable, as affording the moſt elegant modes of ſpending time, and improving the faculties. Beyond all theſe in importance, ſhe placed real knowledge and ſound morality: ſhe taught Elizabeth a habit of ſubduing herſelf, which made the taſk pleaſant, and gave her the beſt command over her paſſions. She made it entertaining to her ſagacity to diſcover in nice points what was her duty; and, aided by the moſt docile diſpoſition, ſhe enabled her to put this knowledge in practice.

Such was the perſon, whom at fifteen years of age, Elizabeth found herſelf, by a fever of a few days, deprived of! Her father was at the time with her; and though himſelf greatly hurt at an event which ſo increaſed his difficulties, and greatly dejected in the general temper of his ſpirits by his inceſſant uneaſineſſes, yet he ſtrove to comfort her; and as ſoon as poſſible, placed near her, in the ſame ſituation her valuable friend had occupied,

a woman

a woman of much more ſhewy recommendations, but not her equal in ſterling merit. It mattered little at the time; for Elizabeth's heart was formed to admit no ſecond affection; ſhe treated her new governeſs with reſpect; but her ſpirit never roſe after the loſs of her predeceſſor.

There was a cloud ſpread, as it were, by the hand of Nature, over Elizabeth at her birth, and which every circumſtance of her exiſtence, as it unfolded itſelf to her perception, ſeemed to increaſe. The firſt ſentiment ſhe could remember, was that of fear of Lady Jemima: ſhe ſoon was aware that her father was kind to her by ſtealth: ſhe had been ill treated by her half-ſiſters, and uniformly confined to a ſolitude which every expanding idea convinced her was not the common lot of daughters. She had now loſt the only companion of her hours: every ſtimulative, every reſource, every hope, ſeemed buried with her; and nothing leſs cogent than

than her father's wiſh would have induced her to improve farther the accompliſhments ſhe had already attained. Byram left her, when he had ſeen her tolerably well reconciled to this firſt grievous wound of her heart, and ſhe endeavoured to extract from induſtry its accuſtomed balm; but the mind muſt be in fit order, or the medicine is inefficacious.

Dublin at this time afforded more than its uſual gaiety. The caſtle was filled by more than Britiſh ſplendor; and an adoring populace were intoxicated by the virtues of the viceroy and his lady. Lady Jemima was all faſhion and celebrity: ſhe yielded in ſhew to few even of ſuperior rank; and Byram was ſilly enough to ſuffer his graver mind to be again ſtaggered by what, in his ſober hours, he deſpiſed, and every moment felt to his coſt. His father's bounty to him had been an inexhauſtible reſource; but her ladyſhip's diſſipations had accumulated debts too large

to

to be brought to account. Of ſome of them he was aware; of others he was ignorant; and at the end of the gay ſeaſon, he found himſelf overwhelmed by demands, debilitated in health, and ſtill more prone than ever to wretched reflections. Neither from his wife nor her daughters was the ſmalleſt conſolation to be derived. Lady Jemima refuſed to retrench for the ſake of œconomy, or to leave Dublin for the ſake of his health. The Miſs Byrams, in attainments children, in pertneſs adults, had learned to re-echo their mamma's opinions: they indeed had little to boaſt from maternal love; but maternal example they could plead; and as they took the ſuperior negligence they lived in, for the indulgence due to a lady of quality's children, they complained of nothing, they conteſted nothing that came from Lady Jemima.

Byram's indiſpoſition increaſing with his melancholy; and his mind finding nothing

thing but Elizabeth, that it could reſt on, he reſolved to viſit again his houſe in the north, alone; and on his arrival there fancied himſelf mended and cheared; but his daughter was alarmed by the rapid alteration ſhe obſerved in him; and her fears proved too juſt; for he had been with her only a fortnight, when his ſymptoms grew alarming. Her tender cares and filial piety ſerved rather to increaſe the dejection that was preying on him, than to ſupport him under it; for in theſe uninterrupted hours of dullneſs, his guilt towards her mother appeared to his fancy, in all its extent of cruel conſequences; and he conſidered himſelf as receiving from Elizabeth thoſe attentions which were not his due. For ſome days together this would ſo operate on his imagination, that he would not ſee her: afterwards his love for her would predominate; he perſuaded himſelf that his kindneſs towards the daughter might, in ſome meaſure atone for his neglect of the mother, and he would not ſuffer her to leave his bed-ſide.

Elizabeth, with the conſent of her governeſs, had written in the moſt reſpectful terms to Lady Jemima, informing her of Mr. Byram's ſituation; and now that his danger increaſed ſo rapidly, ſhe, with a heart almoſt broken, wrote again to her; but neither of her letters was noticed. She, therefore, bent her attention wholly to her father; and, prompted equally by love and duty, ſhe omitted nothing that could by any means conduce to his recovery, or temporary eaſe. She expected every day a viſit from Lady Jemima; and not hoping any indulgence from her lenity, ſhe was ſcrupulous in all her cares; but ſhe watched, and was in readineſs in vain, for to viſit a ſick huſband was the laſt of her ladyſhip's intentions or wiſhes.

After almoſt three months of alternate hope and fear, ſhe was ſummoned at midnight from her bed, where ſhe had juſt thrown herſelf, without undreſſing, by the nurſe, who told her Mr. Byram was dying. She haſtened to him, and found him recovering

covering from a ſevere fit of coughing He was aware that his ſtrength could not long oppoſe attacks ſo often repeated, and with ſuch increaſed violence; the imminence of his danger had fixed his wavering mind, and made him determine on a point he ought long ſince to have determined on, that of telling Elizabeth where, after his deceaſe, ſhe muſt ſeek her mother. He had ſo effectually ſhunned all communication with his former connections, that he had only conjecture as an authority for ſuppoſing his firſt wife ſtill alive, and ſtill reſiding with Mrs. Halnaby in Kent. Of Lord Armathwaite, who had long ceaſed to notice his ſiſter, he knew no more than that death had releaſed him from his counteſs, and that he had gone abroad; but as no return from the army ever mentioned him, it was to be ſuppoſed that he was in no official capacity. In this uncertainty he meant to tell Elizabeth the ſtory of her unfortunate mother; and after giving her all the information in his power, to leave her to chuſe whither

whither ſhe ſhould reſort. With great difficulty he prefaced his narrative, ſo as to prepare her for unexpected communications; but he got no farther than to tell her that he had caſually met her mother firſt at the houſe of a Mr. Rufford, a clergyman in Berkſhire, who had a wife and one daughter, when his cough returned, and he was unable to ſpeak. Recovering himſelf in about a quarter of an hour, he ſent his daughter to his eſcritoire to fetch a ſmall box he directed her to find. She brought it; and he took out of it a ſhagreen caſe, which he put into her hands, and bid her open. She did ſo, and found it contained a miniature picture of a young woman.——"That," ſaid he, "is the picture of your mother—keep it ſafely and ſecretly, till you meet with her; and as ſome doubts may hereafter ariſe about your birth, if any ſuch ſhould occur, look at it, and you will ſee——here his voice again failed—he ſunk exhauſted, and roſe no more to ſenſe or recollection.

END OF VOL. I.

J O A N!!!

A

NOVEL.

BY

MATILDA FITZJOHN.

You have no great pretenſions to wit or ſprightlineſs of genius.—I grant it.

MARC. ANTONIN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1796.

JOAN!!!

CHAP. I.

THE diſtreſs of Elizabeth, whom, till the loſs of her governeſs, the ſhaft of ſorrow had never immediately reached, now hardly admitted of exaggeration. Happily for her, ſhe did not at the moment ſee it in its extent: ſhe was inſenſible of all loſs, excepting that of her father: ſhe was too much ſtunned to recollect that it involved in it the privation of every dependence of life; that it took from her her home, her ſecurity, nay, perhaps her daily food and neceſſary raiment. She could have no hopes from Lady Jemima

or her ſiſters, and beyond them there was no one to whom ſhe dared to look; for though ſhe knew that Sir Clifford Byram was alive, ſhe knew alſo that Mr. Byram had taken the utmoſt pains to conceal her from him; and Lady Jemima and the young ladies had not unfrequently, in their envious diſpoſition to mortify her, told her plainly that ſhe was indebted for the great indulgences ſhe enjoyed, ſolely to Sir Clifford's ignorance, that there was ſuch a perſon as herſelf. Far indeed was this from the fact; for Sir Clifford, though his ſenſe of honor prompted him to ſupport his ſon in all the conſequences of a match he had driven him into, ſo heartily deteſted the ſubſequent inſolence, caprice and folly of his daughter-in-law and her progeny, that had he heard of Joanna or Elizabeth, her ladyſhip would have ſtood but a ſorry chance of preference. But of this the helpleſs orphan was ignorant; or ſhe might have found in the corrected judg-

ment

ment and ſincere repentance of Sir Clifford, a ſecond father, and an affluent proviſion.

If Lady Jemima was not to be moved by the trifling conſideration of her huſband's dangerous illneſs, ſhe was, however, not inſenſible to the neceſſity of her taking a journey into the north on his death, that ſhe might ſecure whatever was valuable. Byram had nothing that could be called his own; he, therefore, made no will; but left the ſurvivors to ſtem the torrent of his debts by the ſmall ſupplies of his current income. The ſeparate proviſion ſettled on Lady Jemima, at her marriage, though her ladyſhip ſpent the intereſt, he ſuppoſed untouched in the principal; and to that he truſted for a proviſion for them, till the deceaſe of his father, when he did not doubt, if Sir Clifford did not leave them the whole of his property, that ſtill they would be munificently fortuned.

Here, however, he was miſtaken. Lady Jemima had played deep; and ill fortune purſuing her through ſeveral weeks, ſhe had been forced to have recourſe to her truſtees whom ſhe found the way of cajoling and ſold out her ſeparate ſtock, making, it muſt be confeſſed, at the time of annihilating this fund, a reſolution to replace it at the firſt opportunity, which, as ſhe played generally with ſucceſs, and was increaſing in experience, ſhe did not at all doubt ſhe might eaſily do; but unfortunately thouſands are much ſooner ſquandered than accumulated; and however paltry a large ſum appeared in her eyes, while ſhe had it in poſſeſſion, and ſighed for ſome pleaſure it was to purchaſe, yet it was a taſk much too formidable for her levity even to *begin* a plan of œconomy. She found ſhe could go on without the money: it was gone; and what ſignified thinking about it?

But when, on hearing that ſhe was a widow, ſhe was forced to an inveſtigation, and

and found that there were not the means ſhe expected of gratifying her projected ſcheme of mourning profuſion: when ſhe ſuſpected that it was not ſo much a queſtion, whether ſhe ſhould ſend her coach to be put in mourning, or wait the building of another, as whether ſhe ſhould have *any* or *none*, ſhe was ſtartled. She thought of ſending immediately to Sir Clifford Byram; but he was in England, where he had for ſome years remained, that he might not ſee the fruits of his own culpable zeal; and Lady Jemima, though ſeldom inclined to deſpond, where her own powers were her reliance, felt that ſhe muſt lower her haughty tones moſt painfully before her wants would plead with Sir Clifford.

To the houſe in the north, therefore, ſhe bent her way, as the beſt method of avoiding humiliating obſervation, and of ſecuring what might be there. Unwilling

to

to admit vexatious truths into her mind, ſhe, on the journey, perſuaded herſelf that ſhe ſhould find hoards of wealth in the diſmal old manſion; and calling to her recollection the many ſtories of hidden treaſure, annexed to antique family reſidences, ſhe would gladly have dilapidated the houſe for the chance of its contents, could ſhe have forgotten that as it was not her huſband's property, ſhe might embroil herſelf.

Her two daughters occupied a more than uſual ſhare of her thoughts juſt at this time. She had left them in Dublin, therefore had no perſonal charge of them: ſhe loved them not, becauſe they did not gratify her vanity, ſhe conſequently was not uneaſy for their fates; but ſhe recollected them as impediments to a plan which might at once have recompenſed her for the loſs of Byram, his fortune, and his father's favor.

This

This was no other than that of a ſecond marriage, projected in her fertile imagination, before ſhe had put on her weeds for her former partner. Her glaſs, her woman, and her train of idolaters, had told her, and had ſworn, that if her beauty was not proof againſt the hand of time, it was ſtill reparable to a degree of perfection unrivalled. So many of the firſt men of faſhion in Hibernia, and in Britain, had breathed the ſoft accents of love, and curſed the Fates which had pre-diſpoſed of her hand, that ſhe doubted not an innumerable hoſt would be in extaſies at her emancipation, and croud to offer her riches and honor. Like Alnaſchar the glaſs merchant, ſhe ſet her fancy in a ferment, and practiſed all the inſolence the ſuppoſed ſubmiſſion of others might give occaſion to. She had ſettled the niceſt points of her new eſtabliſhment to her ſatisfaction; and nothing gave her uneaſineſs but the delay ſhe muſt ſubmit to, which, unleſs ſhe found the fancied treaſure

ſure in the old houſe might perhaps compel her to deſcend to perſuaſion of Sir Clifford Byram. Her certainty of finding hoards, increaſed as ſhe ruminated: the country all around *looked* quite as if money had been hid in the neighbourhood: the firſt glance ſhe had of the houſe ſtruck her, as it never had done before, with the idea of miſerly ſaving. It was impoſſible that her trifling expences, money which went only a few pounds at a time, ſhould have conſumed ſuch an income as Mr. Byram's. It was very odd ſhe ſhould have this ſort of prediction which ſhe had never felt before in her mind, unleſs there was ſomething in it: ſhe was ſure money would be found, if it were but diligently ſought for.

Thus intoxicated with extravagant ideas, which had neither foundation nor ſupport, ſhe reached the manſion, and entered it without the ſmalleſt animadverſion on the fragile poſſeſſions of the world, or the

awfully unforeſeen diſaſters which ſeparate the ſtrongeſt ties of nature. She had never for a moment felt for Byram the common affection which will, in ſpite of all oppoſition, grow up between two perſons engaged in one intereſt, and dependent on one fate. It was his expected wealth that had firſt attracted her; it was his poſſeſſing ſuperior power to gratify her darling follies that attached her to him; and now that he was dead, ſhe ſeemed to think it the wiſer part to look forward. On entering the houſe, ſhe ſent an abrupt meſſage to Elizabeth deſiring a delivery of whatever keys &c. ſhe might have in her poſſeſſion. The ſorrowing girl had juſt ſhut herſelf up in a room adjoining that where the corpſe had been prepared for interment, and was not at all aware of her ladyſhip's arrival; but inſtantly recollecting what was due to Lady Jemima Byram, ſhe roſe to attend her.

She had leſs fear than was uſual on occaſions ſo tremendous as thoſe which car-

ried her into the preſence of this great lady; for grief ſhe conſidered as a temper of mind ſubduing all diſtinctions. She hoped the evidences of her ſorrow would not give additional pain to her father's widow: ſhe ſtrove to be ſteady, that ſhe might not diſtreſs her;—it appeared to her a hard taſk to meet one who muſt feel agonies of diſtreſs ſo nearly equal to her own; and ſhe ſtood before her ladyſhip in mute diſtreſs, before ſhe could at all frame her mind to the emergency. She was ſunk too deeply into herſelf to remark that neither the haſte of her journey, nor the event which had cauſed it, had in the ſmalleſt particular affected Lady Jemima's external ſcrupuloſity. She was rouged as high as for a midnight ball; ſhe had rejected no part of her uſual ornaments as warring with the ſtate of her mind; for her mind had never been at hoſtilities with folly or impertinence; nor would ſhe perhaps have been made aware, by the longeſt lecture, that ſhe was unfeeling or abſurd; but the firſt ſight of Elizabeth

was

was a contrafting comment and a tacit reproof on her ill-placed tawdrineſs: for Elizabeth, untaught by faſhion, and deſtitute of every monitor but a correct unvitiated judgment, had by choice put on mourning as ſoon as ſhe began to mourn; and though ſhe had nothing but the remnant of that ſhe had worn for her governeſs, it had on her all the effect of the deepeſt weeds. Her dreſs was black: her hair, which to pleaſe Mr. Byram was always, as nature deſigned it, looſe and flowing, added by its gloſſy brown to the effect of her dreſs. Round her neck, by a black ribbon, hung a picture of her father which he had a ſhort time before given her, and which now it was her conſolation to contemplate; her figure, which reſembled the lily bowed by too impetuous a ſhower, was always elegant, but now peculiarly intereſting, and her countenance, which depended not on ſmiles or the glow of health and hilarity for its uncommon beauty, expreſſed all the tenderneſs and dignity of ſorrow founded in reaſon.

Lady

Lady Jemima, who had not ſeen her for ſeveral years, and who having ſeldom recollected her, and never enquired after her, had not corrected her ideas in proportion to the lapſe of time, firſt ſtared, it muſt be owned, even though ſhe could not own it to herſelf, with *admiration*. The whole circle of her acquaintance, though it included whatever the world applauds in the perſon or the manners, never had preſented, nor could it preſent to her a form ſo lovely, a countenance ſo nearly divine as that ſhe now beheld. The malignity of her nature was deſerting its ſeat in her boſom; and in another moment love muſt have filled its place; but ſhe inſtantly recalled her more familiar companion; and ſhe eaſed the pain ſhe felt, by giving vent to her envy in the opprobrious remark, "Good God! child, what a height you are grown to! why you will be a monſter!" Then taking her arm roughly, and turning her about, ſhe examined her figure, uttering aloud a ſuſpicion that ſhe was or would be

crooked,

crooked, and comforting her evil genius by obſerving, that ſhe might be every thing charming in her own eyes; but that ſhe was not at all faſhionable. Tears, not of diſappointed vanity, but of genuine grief, rendered more pungent by barbarity, burſt from the miſerable girl's eyes. Her ladyſhip choſe to miſunderſtand them: in a rough voice ſhe muttered, "Well, if you cannot bear to be told a plain truth, I can't help it;" and in a ſhriller and more imperious tone, "Give me up all the keys—*I* am miſtreſs of the houſe now—it is time I ſhould be, I perceive." Elizabeth obeyed in ſilence, and haſtened out of the room that ſhe might offend no more.

It was not in human nature now to forbear turning her thoughts upon herſelf and her future fate: ſhe could hope for nothing, if Lady Jemima could be thus cruel with the hand of misfortune ſtill chill upon her. She retired to the room where her governeſs was ſitting; and being obliged

to

to account for her freſh diſtreſs by ſaying Lady Jemima had given her a very different reception from that ſhe had expected, ſhe found another opportunity of increaſing her knowledge of the world; for her prudent governeſs ſeemed diſpoſed to take part with the aggreſſor, and juſtified her treatment of her pupil by alledging her ladyſhip's rank, and reminding her *chere mademoiſelle* that ſhe was but a baſtard, and therefore had no rights.

The hearts of all ſeemed hardened; and Elizabeth retreated to her inner chamber, that ſhe might at leaſt indulge in the privacy of woe. In paſſing through that where Mr. Byram's body lay, and which the frequency of her viſits rendered as little dreary to her as any other room of the houſe, ſhe could not forbear ſtopping at the coffin with the ſad reflection, that when the lifeleſs corpſe ſhould be removed for burial, every veſtige of protection for her vaniſhed. She felt in all its force, and

and with every addition of perſonal miſery, that jealous unwillingneſs all who have loſt a friend and retain a heart muſt feel when the earth is about to cloſe over the once-lov'd object of their ſight. The ſound of feet drove her away: ſhe heard, during the afternoon, uninterrupted by any concern for her, all that buſtle and thoſe noiſes which want no interpreter to the keen conception of grief. After ſome hours ſolitude, her governeſs ſo far got over her *cadaverous* ſenſibilities, and a ſmall fear, not proper to be confeſſed, that Mr Byram might be frolickſome in his winding ſheet, as to pay the young lady a viſit, with the tender and reaſonable requeſts, *Je vous prie, Mademoiſelle, mangez un peu*; and *De grace, Madame, conſolez-vous*; aiding her energy by the novel arguments *car c'eſt une folie pleurer les novels*. Elizabeth's ſorrows roſe ſuperior to ſuch traſh of argument: ſhe aſked only the ſhort queſtion, "Do you remember loſing *your* father, madam?" and then requeſted ſhe might be left alone. If her

her comforter had before any regards of compaſſion or humanity in her breaſt, the reproachful query annihilated them; and ſhe departed in diſdain, determined that as Lady Jemima *muſt* be rich, and Miſs Elizabeth *might* be poor, and as ſhe herſelf was, againſt her will, very much of the latter deſcription, ſhe would pay her court to the widow rather than to the orphan.

CHAP. II.

ELIZABETH having requeſted, from a ſervant, a little food to ſuſtain ſinking nature, and feeling, even depreſſed as ſhe was, a ſpirit too great to riſque any more of Lady Jemima's eloquence, remained a voluntary priſoner for the night.

She lay down on the bed without undreſſing, and about two in the morning, her melancholy vigils were diſturbed by the ſound of footſteps in the adjoining apartment: the door of her room was tried, but being faſtened within, was only ſhaken; ſhe next heard an odd kind of howling noiſe; but in about half an hour all was ſtill. Neither education, prejudice, nor conſcience having rendered her timid, ſhe was determined not to ſuffer an uninveſtigated dread to alarm her: ſhe therefore roſe, took the light that ſtood in her chamber, and went into the next, where ſhe at firſt ſaw nothing more than ſhe was accuſtomed

tomed to; but in a few moments ſhe perceived the feathers on the coffin ſhake, and the corners of the pall ſwing: ſhe enquired, in a trembling voice, who was there; no anſwer was returned: ſhe felt a violent wind ruſh towards her face; and the candle in her hand was blown out. Her fortitude was not equal to any farther experiment, and chill and palpitating, ſhe found her way to the bed. Soon after the heavy turret clock had ſtruck four, ſhe heard deep ſounding footſteps ſtalk acroſs the mourning chamber: the door was ſhut without violence, and the ſteps died away. She roſe as ſoon as light appeared, and again went into the next room, but all was as it had been; and ſhe wiſhed to perſuade herſelf that ſhe had ſlept and dreamt.

Lady Jemima had paſſed the night with equal watchfulneſs, but greater activity. She had been ranſacking every probable and improbable place in the houſe, for a will, and the hidden treaſure ſhe expected; but

but ſhe had found neither. Had Elizabeth known how her ladyſhip had been employed, her wonder and her fears reſpecting what ſhe had heard and ſeen, would have been done away; but ſhe would have been deceived: it was not Lady Jemima, or any one of her agents, who had occaſioned what diſturbed her in the mourning chamber, nor could any one of whom ſhe enquired give her any ſatisfaction other than the ſuppoſition that the chamber was haunted.

That ſhe might ſink in her uſual melancholy this new oppreſſion of her ſpirits, which the evidence of her ſenſes would not ſuffer her to reſolve into imagination, ſhe ſtrolled alone into the garden, and was deeply meditating on the queſtion, "Who now is to ſupport me through life?" when ſhe found ſhe had ſtrayed farther than ſhe had intended, and was entering a very woody grove adjoining the garden, through which there was no path. The fear of loſing herſelf made her turn

turn haſtily back, and at the moment, ſhe ſaw leap down from a tall tree about ten yards from her, a man: he ſeemed as if he had lain in wait for her, and was preparing to purſue her; but he had lamed himſelf with his fall; and ſhe had time to get before him. Lame as he was, he however made ſuch ſpeed after her, as obliged her to run with all her power, and convinced her that he had ſome ill intention in the chace. She regained the houſe in ſafety, and turning round, ſaw that he had deſiſted from his purſuit. She mentioned her alarm to a maid-ſervant ſhe met, and deſired the garden might be ſearched: but the girl reſolved it into the houſe's being haunted, and was certain no one of the ſervants would be perſuaded to go in queſt of the apparition.

Elizabeth went to her uſual breakfaſt room, where ſhe found her governeſs. She told her how ſhe had been diſturbed in the night, and what ſhe had ſeen in the mourning chamber and the garden; and intimating,

timating that ſhe feared ſome ill-deſigning perſons had got into the houſe and grounds, ſhe requeſted her to ſhare her bed the following night. Madame ſeemed at a loſs to excuſe herſelf from doing what it was evident ſhe did not chuſe to do; but the ſubject was forgotten in Lady Jemima's ſending for Miſs Elizabeth.

She was obeyed without delay, but not without reluctance; and whatever little hope might have been excited by her expreſſing a wiſh for a ſecond interview, none at all ſoothing to an aching heart remained after ſhe began to ſpeak. Without condeſcending to thoſe common regards of humanity, which would have excuſed Elizabeth from appearing like a criminal before her, ſhe queſtioned her as to what ſums of money ſhe had received from Mr. Byram. In the ſituation he kept his daughter in, money could have purchaſed her no gratification; for ſhe had never been ſuffered to aſſociate with thoſe who were

ſtyled

ſtyled the neighbourhood: ſhe was ſupplied with whatever ſhe wanted without the medium of purchaſe, and all her expences were defrayed by Mr. Byram. Excepting therefore for her little charities, money was uſeleſs to her; and Lady Jemima looked at once pleaſed and diſappointed, when told that Elizabeth never had been miſtreſs of twenty pounds.

She next interrogated her as to the means of life ſhe deſigned to purſue, giving her to underſtand plainly that her father had left nothing, that his debts were large, and that ſhe muſt no longer continue to enhance expences which, as far as was poſſible, were to be immediately reduced. Elizabeth could not comprehend the whole of the cruelty projected againſt her: with a voice that would have ſoftened obduracy itſelf, ſhe requeſted to know how it was her ladyſhip's pleaſure to diſpoſe of her. "Nay, child," returned Byram's widow, "I do not mean to *diſpoſe* of you, I only mean to

get

get rid of you. I aſk you what you intend to do with yourſelf?"

" And can you, replied Elizabeth, aſk ſuch a queſtion of a poor helpleſs unfriended being, who has been kept here from her birth, in peace and happineſs I confeſs, but in ignorance of every thing hard fortune teaches? How am I to diſpoſe of myſelf? Where am I to ſeek a livelihood? What have I ſeen of the world? I know no more than this houſe, and the country ten miles round it—excepting viſiting a few of the peaſants' cabins, I never was in any other than this, nor did I wiſh it while my father lived. I have no claims on you madam: my father always taught me my dependence and your goodneſs in noticing me; but am I then to be abandoned? Will you turn me out and leave me to periſh? For heaven's ſake have pity for me, though I am unworthy of your love, place me in any ſtation where I can get a living, and I will be no longer a burthen to you---perhaps I could teach what I have been taught myſelf

myſelf---I have no right to be proud---I will be induſtrious."

"Go away, I will ſend for you again," was the only anſwer Lady Jemima could truſt herſelf to make; for a ſentiment of compaſſion roſe and impeded utterance. It was however ſoon overcome in the purſuit of her favourite idea of hidden treaſure. This, and an examination of ſome tenants ſhe hoped to have found in arrear; the orders ſhe had to give for the morrow, which was to be the day of interment, and a variety of cares for herſelf, occupied her; and the painful neceſſity ſhe found herſelf under of writing in ſupplicating terms to Sir Clifford Byram who ſhe knew hated her, ſo diſturbed the *harmony* of her temper, that towards evening, ſhe felt fitly diſpoſed to entertain herſelf again with Elizabeth, who had taken refuge from the increaſed unpleaſantneſs of her governeſs, in the mourning chamber, where nothing had again occurred to terrify her.

Her

Her ladyſhip was not perfectly certain that her application to Sir Clifford might not be followed by a viſit of inveſtigation from him; her letter ſhe was confident would ſoften him: ſhe had forborne all mention of Elizabeth, not indeed in compliance with Byram's uniform wiſh that he might never know of his *imprudence*; but in conformity to the dictates of her own envy and ſelfiſhneſs. She had not vanity to ſuppoſe that either herſelf or her daughters could entirely exclude their humble relative from notice, were ſhe once brought forward: ſhe feared Sir Clifford's bounty might be excited with his compaſſion, and her own ſhare of it thereby leſſened: ſhe feared ſtill more the being compelled to admit a rival under her protection. She was therefore reſolved to diſmiſs her as ſoon as poſſible, and in a way that ſhould ſecure her againſt any farther trouble, when her fine plans of aggrandiſement and ſplendor ſhould be realiſed.

Unknown to her ſhe was taking ſo much pains to injure, ſhe had, in the courſe of the day, ſounded her governeſs, and found her ſo entirely devoted to her ſervice, that no oppoſition was to be dreaded on her part. The hope of being continued in ſome capacity, however humble, that could entitle her to boaſt herſelf as the dependent of a lady of quality, made Madame as ſupple as could be wiſhed. She ſaw in an inſtant, either by dint of her own ſagacity, or Lady Jemima's perſpicuity of expreſſion, how *terriblement incommode* it muſt be to have *une jolie fille* to take care of, who might perhaps *en peu de tems* be more taken notice of than the young ladies her ſiſters, who muſt marry or be dependent.

Having again ſummoned Elizabeth to appear, ſhe, in the forms of croſs-examination, queſtioned her as to Mr. Byram's expences while at Balla-Craig, and racked every fibre of her affectionate heart, by reproachful comments on profuſion, which ſhe

ſhe could neither ſpecify nor prove. She then deſired to ſee *her apartment.*

With the reſignation of a culprit giving up property to legal inquiſition, Elizabeth anticipated Lady Jemima's curioſity, which almoſt ſuſpended her malevolence, when ſhe ſaw a ſmall room, far from being one of the beſt in the houſe, very moderately furniſhed, but decorated in a ſtyle beyond all expence; for it was the beloved haunt of genius, induſtry, and taſte. Nothing was wanting that could aſſiſt talents; but there was no diſplay of oſtentatious ſedulity. She had a good muſical inſtrument, a neat apparatus for painting, and another for work, in which was a nearly finiſhed piece of embroidery, ſo beautiful, that her ladyſhip ſtopped to aſk whence it was copied. "It is my own deſign madam," replied Elizabeth:--"Well! but," interrupted Lady Jemima, "here ſeems agreat deal of it, and all on crape! Common people ſhould not undertake ſuch expenſive works;

they come to a great deal of money. Beſides, child, when did you expect to wear it? it's for a dreſs I ſuppoſe---what were you to be introduced?" "I intended it, madam," ſaid the poor girl heſitatingly, "for a dreſs for you, if you would have done me the honor to wear it."---"O, aye! finiſh it, child, by all means---I am ſure it will be very handſome, and it will be juſt ready in ſix months, for I do not intend to mourn longer." Elizabeth curtſied, and hoped ſhe was gaining ground.

Her books, which were well choſen, but not of an expenſive appearance, did not long detain the inquiſitive lady. A myops in her viſual organs and in her intellects, ſhe ran her noſe againſt a few, and muttering *Zimmermann*, *Genlis*, *Taſſo*, *Davila*, *Blair*, ſhe paſſed on, and deſired next to ſee her wardrobe. With this indelicate requeſt Elizabeth immediately complied, and leading the way to another ſmall room, where were two neat beds, ſhe opened

opened a closet which contained a riding dress, two or three ordinary gowns of printed calico, and about as many muslin, all calculated for a growing girl, whose appearance was intended to be no more than decent. In this article, and in all others where expence depended on choice, the provision for Elizabeth had been regulated by the good sense of her former governess, who foreseeing that her pupil's situation might depend on the caprice of a fine lady, and penetrating her character sufficiently to perceive that while she professed to love and admire, she hated and envied, wished in every thing to avoid giving offence, and above all, to keep Elizabeth's mind in a perfect state of sober moderation.

Here then was nothing to censure; but it was difficult for her ladyship to believe she had seen all. She was sure the Miss Byrams must have wardrobes three times as large---but then to be sure there was a difference.

What

What ſhe had ſcrutinized had nearly diſarmed her of her ill humour; and ſhe could not leave the room without feeling the inferiority of her own indocile offspring, the eldeſt of whom could ſcarcely write her name legibly, and had plodded in ſullen ſtupor over the firſt rudiments of her own language, while the younger curled her hair out of the French dialogues: it might there aptly have been obſerved that there was *to be ſure a difference.*

Lady Jemima ſtiffly curtſying, and too much unhinged even to ſcold, retreated to her buſy occupations, and left Elizabeth to conjecture what could be the reaſon of this viſit of inſpection. Her governeſs ſolved all the difficulty by obſerving that her ladyſhip had certainly *raiſon* for all ſhe did; for ſhe was a very ſenſible lady.

In the various modifications of mental diſtreſs which Elizabeth had undergone, and little accuſtomed as ſhe was to direct for herſelf, ſhe had not troubled her brains

to

to enquire how ſhe was to be ſupplied with mourning for her father; but this afternoon, ſeeing preparations for that of others in hand, ſhe mentioned it to her governeſs, who ſeemed not prepared with an anſwer, but adviſed her to ſpeak to Lady Jemima on the ſubject. Fearing ſhe might be thought negligent or helpleſs, if ſhe remained ſilent, ſhe reſolved to do ſo, and ſent a reſpectful requeſt to her ladyſhip for an audience. Whether Lady Jemima was vexed at the interruption, or had only recovered the aſperity of her temper, may be doubted; but Elizabeth found her leſs tractable than ever. To a queſtion that ought neither to have ſurpriſed nor offended her, ſhe anſwered in terms of unlimited reproach, and took the opportunity her rouſed paſſion afforded her to reveal her intentions. She accuſed Elizabeth of having, with a view to drive her and her ſervants from the houſe, ſpread a report that it was haunted: ſhe called her the object of all Mr. Byram's profuſion and folly: ſhe rated her into tears;

and

and then told her, ſhe would allow her three days to provide herſelf with a ſituation; for ſhe meant herſelf to return then to Dublin, and ſhould chooſe to ſee the houſe cleared before ſhe went.

Elizabeth ſupported herſelf againſt the door-caſe while ſhe heard this cruel ſentence; and in ſilence turning one eloquent look of miſery on her capricious perſecutor, would have left the room; but Lady Jemima's wiſh to be cruel was greater than her power; ſhe called her back; and in a ſoftened tone, aſſured her it was far from her intention to diſtreſs her---ſhe muſt herſelf ſee the neceſſity of getting her living by her own induſtry, as ſhe had nothing elſe to depend on: for her part, ſhe wiſhed ſhe could do any thing for her; but really Mr. Byram had been ſo imprudent, and had left her in ſuch diſtreſs, it was out of her power to be generous. Unleſs his father, who had lately treated her very coolly, ſhould be diſpoſed

to

to do ſomething for her daughters, they had no better proviſion than Elizabeth herſelf, which was very hard, as *they* were *legitimate* children. She adviſed her to be comforted, and to go to her own apartment. In the latter injunction, ſhe was obeyed; but where were the means for obeying the former to be ſought?

CHAP. III.

NIGHT came, and Elizabeth, however impreſſed by the appearance in the mourning chamber, would not return to her uſual ſleeping room, although her governeſs would have declined, on frivolous pretences, complying with her requeſt, that ſhe would ſleep with her: at laſt, her pride getting the better of her fears, madame conſented, and at an early hour, ſhe and her *eleve* retired together: ſhe who had heard and ſeen all that had occaſioned the alarm not half ſo much terrified as ſhe who had only heard the report of it. Elizabeth's mind was too full to allow her to ſleep, and rumination on her ſituation, rendered her as little diſpoſed to conjure up fears; but a little after midnight, ſhe again heard ſo diſtinctly ſome one walking in the next room, that ſhe could not perſuade herſelf it was ideal. Again her door was rattled; and ſhe

ſhe heard ſome one in a deep voice call her by her name. Madame could ſham ſleep no longer: Elizabeth, determined to find out what it was, got up and dreſt herſelf, and all this time heard the walking continued. Her governeſs had riſen with her, under pretence of ſharing her inveſtigation; but it was to prepare for flight; for when Elizabeth had lighted a candle, and was unlocking the chamber door, ſhe ſlid out at an oppoſite one which led to a back ſtair-caſe. Her young lady had now opened the door, and was ſtepping forward, when ſhe ſaw a tall ſtout man, who ſeemed preparing to enter the room. She faintly ſcreamed, and was ſinking, when he, dropping on his knees, and begging her in the moſt genuine Iriſh brogue, *ten thouſand millions* of pardons, aſſured her he had only *frightened her for her own happineſs*, that *he had taken a great deal of pains to terrify her, in hopes of being able to ſpeak to her*, for that he had ſomething to ſay *in private*, which, *as it was a great ſecret, he wiſhed nobody to hear:*

bear: "I came here," ſaid Teague, "laſt night, to *ſpake* to your ladyſhip, but I believe I had got a little in my head *more than my brains;* for *faeing* my poor dear maſter, I went to cry over him a bit; and I went to *ſlape* by the coffin, and this morning I ſaw you come into the garden; ſo I gets up a *trae* to *fae* which way you took, and I jumped down I *belave* in too great a hurry; for I got lamed, and you run away."

"Well, but for Heaven's ſake, who are you, and what is your buſineſs?" interrupted his trembling hearer. "I am," replied the man---"no, *I am not;* but *I was*, ſervant to my maſter as long as he lived---no till he went away from *dear* Dublin, *dear* ſoul, and I nurſed him when he was very ill, before he came away from his own home; and he told me he had ſomething upon his mind; and I told him, Why dear ſir don't you *ſpake* it? Tell my lady, or write to your father, and I dare ſay you will be better, or if that won't do, there is Father O'Leary, that

that I always truſts with my little matters, and he always does me good; and I dare ſay he would take care of yours.---No no, Dennis, ſays my maſter, Father O'Leary can do me no good---and I believe he ſaid his wife, my lady here, could do him no good; but that indeed is not much to be wondered at, for I believe *ſhe never did any good but miſchief;* and as for his father, he ſaid he could not tell him what ailed him, without *letting him know it*; and that he had ſworn never to do---and ſo at laſt, after a great long deal about it, he truſts poor honeſt Dennis Geohegan, and he tells me that all his concern was about you; and he ſays, Ah Dennis, that *ſwate crature* in the north, that I call my *naitral* daughter, is no more my *naitral* daughter than ſhe is yours. But then ſays I, dear maſter, whoſe *naitral* daughter may ſhe be? Nobody's, ſays my maſter; but, ſays he, what grieves me the moſt is, that *as I have nothing to give her I can give her nothing*. Why no ſir, ſays I; but if ſhe is not your *naitral* child, why

ſhould you grieve about other folk's children? O Dennis! ſays my maſter, *you do not underſtand me, becaiſe you do not know my meaning.* And then, madam, my lady popt in, and I popt out; and my maſter afterwards ſeemed ſorry for what he had told me, *becaiſe* then *I knew it*; but the devil fetch me if I ſhould have told any body a word of it."

"Well, but what is your particular buſineſs with me?" ſaid Elizabeth, agoniſed with ſuſpenſe and doubt.---"Do you mean only to tell me what I cannot credit, that I am not Mr. Byram's daughter?"

"No no, my dear young lady," replied Dennis with earneſt affection---"what I wanted, is *to make my dear maſter happy now he is dead.* He uſed, dear ſoul, to truſt me with all his money; and ſometimes there was ſuch plenty about his houſe, that one might help one's-ſelf, and nobody be the worſe; and ſo then, I uſed to cheat my maſter for his own ſake, and lay by a little

to

to help him when caſh run low, as indeed it often did latterly, and ſo I had about thirteen hundred pounds in my hands of my maſter's when I heard he was dead, and ſo when my lady aſked for money, I told her there was none; for I was determined to ſave it for you, as my maſter would have done his dear ſelf---and here it is, ſaid honeſt Dennis, putting into his young lady's hand a packet of notes, and a canvas bag,---take them; and God and St. Patrick bleſs you; for you are a *ſwate* lady."

" Well, but theſe are not mine, good Dennis," ſaid Elizabeth: " I have no right to them. " Yes yes, you have," ſaid he: " I muſt not not ſtay longer, for *I will be found to be loſt, and then I will be miſſed.*" And away he tript, leaving Elizabeth in amazement to go to bed.

The myſtery of the preceding night was now unveiled, but a new one ſucceeded to it---why ſhould Mr. Byram deny her to

to be his daughter, when his words his actions, and the whole of his conduct, had ſo much more forcibly than any acknowledgement recogniſed her as ſuch? She could no way ſolve this; but it was ſtill more difficult to her to admit an idea that ſo militated againſt her feelings, and cut her off, as it were, from all connexion with ſociety. Even in her perſon ſhe thought ſhe bore evident contradictions of this ſuppoſition: ſhe was ſo like Mr. Byram, that that circumſtance of itſelf had been ſuppoſed by her governeſs, a reaſon with him for confining her to his houſe in the country.

From this perplexing ſubject which almoſt diſtracted her by its obſcurity and intricacy, ſhe turned her thoughts to Dennis's preſent, which her natural integrity taught her ſhe could not conſcientiouſly retain, eſpecially if a doubt could be entertained of her conſanguinity. Beſide, ſhe knew Lady Jemima to be ſtraitened for

for money---was it generous to keep that which ſhe did not claim, only becauſe ſhe did not know it exiſted?---But, thought Elizabeth, I may make Lady Jemima my friend, at the ſame time that I do an act of integrity---I will carry her the money in the morning; and perhaps ſhe will be pleaſed with me---Yet what right have I to make a merit of giving up what is not my own? and what will be the conſequence to poor Dennis? He will be blamed as diſhoneſt. She now reſolved to return the money to him with an injunction to deliver it to Lady Jemima. It was daylight when ſhe had ſettled this point; and ſhe roſe to execute what ſhe had planned.

Madame who had returned to her bed no more, was eager to meet her in the morning, to explain away her cowardly flight, and to enquire how the affair of the apparition had turned out. Believing moſt religiouſly in her own mind that it was Mr. Byram's ghoſt; and knowing that La-

dy

dy Jemima had vented her diſpleaſure heavily againſt all thoſe who entertained an idea that the houſe was haunted, ſhe had crept in ſilence to her own bed, and confined her fears to her own boſom. She was too much humbled by the ſenſe of her own behaviour at the moment of danger, to be very troubleſome to her young lady, who anſwered her that it was a ſervant buſied in the mourning chamber, and that ſhe had herſelf converſed with him, before ſhe went to bed again. She then enquired for Dennis, and inſiſted on his reſtoring the notes and money to Lady Jemima: the poor fellow with tears, and on his knees, beſought her to keep them; and nothing would have prevailed on him but her urging the certainty of her making Lady Jemima ſuſpect his integrity, ſhould ſhe, as ſhe muſt, tell her how ſhe had been wronged. "I believe," ſaid Dennis "a man has no right to give up his character for honeſty, *unleſs he is a rogue*, and then he may do as he plaſes. Well, my dear lady,

lady, I will go to my lady with the money, if you will go too; for my lady has a very long head, and I have but a very ſhort one, and ſhe is ſo apt to fancy I ſay what I never ſpoke, that I always like ſome one to be by *when we are alone together*, becauſe their memory perhaps may help mine *when the thing is forgot.*" "Well," replied Elizabeth, "I will be ready to go with you; but it muſt not be till to-morrow; for to-day my dear father---Mr. Byram I mean---is to be buried---I muſt go and take a laſt farewell of him; and then all my hopes in this world are at an end." "O, never deſpair, ſwate young lady," ſaid Dennis, "ſuch a ſwate crature as you muſt always do well in the world." She turned away to hide the guſhing tears; and retiring to the mourning chamber, remained there in deep affliction, which the idea of not being Mr. Byram's daughter ſeemed rather to increaſe than to abate, till the unfeeling crew of hireling mourners came to remove the body. Then, with no external expreſſions of

of ſorrow, but a deep ſigh that ſeemed almoſt to wing her ſoul to heaven, ſhe quitted the room, and having now no longer the beloved remains to guard---no longer being able to cheat herſelf with the deluſion that ſhe was ſtill near her father, ſhe retired, miſerable indeed, to her own apartment, from whence ſhe watched the funeral proceſſion to the church; and liſtening to the tolling of the bell, gueſſed that now the body was conſigned to the ground, and now the faſt-falling earth had cloſed upon it, and cut off all connexion with the world and its ſorrows!

No one ſeemed to think the fatherleſs girl needed ſupport or conſolation at this trying moment. They either forgot her, or perhaps they judged that the illegitimacy of her birth was a fortification to her nerves. Her governeſs however, before the bell had ceaſed to toll, entered, and excuſed her abſence by alledging the neceſſity ſhe was under *de ſervir madame qui ſe*

ſe portoit très mal; but who was already ſo well recovered as to deſire to ſee Miſs Elizabeth immediately---"Beg her ladyſhip to excuſe me for a quarter of an hour," ſaid her young lady; "and I will attend her."--- The requeſt was civilly complied with; and having endeavoured, as much as poſſible, to compoſe her features, ſhe went, in a ſtate of mind that rendered her almoſt inſenſible to any fear of farther cruelty.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The widow's countenance bore no trace of the indiſpoſition madame had depicted, and ſhe received Elizabeth with a degree of urbanity amounting almoſt to friendly cordiality. She not only requeſted her to be ſeated; but ſhe placed a chair for her; and firſt apologizing for the delay in preparing her mourning, ſhe told her that ſhe deferred giving orders for her own till ſhe returned to Dublin, as in articles of faſhion ſhe always choſe to be herſelf the guide, and that if it was agreeable to her ſhe would, at the ſame time, beſpeak what was fit for her.

Byram's dubious daughter was too deeply immerſed in grief to be caught by novel politeneſs, or dazzled by unexpected condeſcenſions. In tears not to be reſtrained, ſhe

ſhe anſwered, " O madam! take no care for me---give me ſomething to wear that ſhall ſhew not how *it is fit* I ſhould mourn; but how *I do* mourn; for ſurely no one ever had cauſe to mourn like me."

"Nay, but be pacified, my dear," ſaid her ladyſhip--" think what *my* ſituation is, and compare your own with it, and you will find me much more an object of pity: think what it is to be left here with a load of debts, and to be forced to ſupplicate a croſs tyrannical old man, who I know hates me, for the payment of them: to have a brother, who I am ſure would never ſtir a finger to aſſiſt me; to have two children, brought up with great expectations, and now left without a penny, but what they muſt he beholden to their covetous grandfather for---and then think of yourſelf: you can never have had any expectations; for illegitimate children can claim nothing, you know."

" O

"O, madam!" interrupted the upbraided mourner: "I pretend to no right, but that of grieving for the beſt of friends. It would be preſumption in me to call Mr. Byram by any other name. For I am told I am not in reality what I have been brought up to think myſelf."

"And who had the inſolence to tell you this?" aſked Lady Jemima, in a tone of ſtartled anger---"Who told you that you were not Mr. Byram's natural daughter?---How came you to hear it?" "I was told," returned Elizabeth "that he himſelf diſclaimed me---he ſaid I was not his child, and where, oh where am I now to look for parents?"

"O very well, very well," interpoſed her ladyſhip, in a vaſtly ſoftened tone, and with the kindeſt looks; "now I underſtand you, my dear; I thought you had meant to ſay---but it does not ſignify what I thought

thought---I was talking about your mourning; but I forgot what I was going to ſpeak about---O now I recollect it---I have juſt had Dennis with me, that ſtupid ignorant fellow, that Mr. Byram truſted as if he had been his ſteward. He ſays that he had concealed thirteen hundred pounds, under an idea that Mr. Byram wiſhed you to have it; but that you, on his offering it to you, generouſly refuſed it---it was very right to do ſo, my dear, for it certainly was not yours---and I think myſelf obliged to you. You ſhall find your account in it, I aſſure you. But do not afflict yourſelf any longer: the funeral is over now; and we muſt turn our thoughts to the living. I ſee I can do no good here; ſo I mean to ſet out for Dublin to-morrow; and if it is agreeable to you, you ſhall go with me and remain at my houſe till I have ſecured ſome proper ſituation for you. I have written to a friend of mine, who I think wants ſuch a young perſon as yourſelf: ſhe reſides

in England, and till I have her anſwer, you are welcome to ſtay with me and the Miſs Byrams."

To a friendleſs creature like Elizabeth, kindneſs, under any modification, ſeemed a bleſſing; and there was in Lady Jemima's laſt words either a real or an aſſumed benevolence, that warmed the chill heart of her unhappy dependent, whoſe pride took no alarm at the intimation that ſhe was to deſcend from a foſtered ſituation, to one where the anxieties, if not the misfortunes of the world, muſt reach her. Lady Jemima ſeemed kind; and Elizabeth felt grateful.

In leaving the parlour, ſhe met Dennis, who came to excuſe his having anticipated the diſcloſure of her generoſity. He had done it from a wrong-headed idea that he could, when Elizabeth was abſent, give her ladyſhip ſome hints which might induce

her to give up at leaſt a part of the money. He therefore ſpoke warmly of Mr. Byram's regard for the young lady, and the duty of ſuch good wives as her ladyſhip to fulfil their deceaſed huſband's wiſhes, neither of which arguments would have any good influence where thirteen hundred pounds and greedineſs were concerned: and as he, with the true inconſiſtency of his country, repeated with equal force the miſunderſtood declaration of his maſter, that Elizabeth was not his natural child, he might have afforded Lady Jemima as good a pretence as ſhe could have wiſhed, for deſerting one who could then claim no obligation on the family; but the buzzing voice of fame had many years ago, and even before ſhe became Byram's wife, whiſpered to her the report of his private marriage, which, as it did not ſuit her inclination to believe it, ſhe oppoſed with incredulity proportioned to the increaſing ſtrength of the rumor. She therefore dared to take no advantage of Dennis's miſtake,

but reſolved, by any means that might offer, to get rid of this formidable enemy.

But what Dennis had hinted reſpecting the no-relation exiſting between Byram and his ſuppoſed daughter, however inclined her ladyſhip was to underſtand his idea of the matter, as ſhe might ſafely have done, and as it was her intereſt it ſhould be underſtood, gave her at the firſt moment of reflection, the moſt ſerious alarm; for ſhe could not perſuade herſelf that her huſband might not in his weaker moments have diſcloſed more to ſome one, if not to Dennis; and ſhe almoſt repented having projected the removing her to Dublin, where ſhe might meet ſome advocate or champion; yet to get rid of her, in the north, where ſhe could not but be ſenſible ſhe was as much an object of attention as herſelf, and far more beloved, appeared ſo impoſſible, that ſhe was forced to appear better principled than ſhe was, by adhering to a promiſe ſhe could not conveniently break.

To

To prevent any oppoſition or ſuſpicion on the part of Elizabeth, ſhe thought it prudent to be civil, and was affectionate to her: ſhe therefore invited her to ſpend the remainder of the day with her, and endeavoured to amuſe the melancholy of her mind, by the ill-ſuited gaiety of her own. The young woman was not deſtitute of curioſity, nor had ſhe always been ſo ſatisfied with the ſeclusion ſhe lived in, as not ſometimes to wiſh for a ſight of the gayer world; but at this time all hope of the future was abſorbed in the ſenſe of what ſhe had loſt in her father; and ſomething ſo like terror palpitated in her boſom whenever ſhe thought of quitting the country, that ſhe half wiſhed Lady Jemima had been leſs kind to her, or kind in a way that would better have accorded with her feelings.

The ſhortneſs of the time not allowing her much preparation, it was agreed that her inſtrument, and all the implements of her occupations,

occupations, ſhould be ſent to Dublin after her. What was to become of her governeſs ſhe dared not enquire; but ſhe was hurt the next morning, when her fate was decided by Lady Jemima's diſmiſſing her with the ſervants. It was indeed a fit reward for Madame's duplicity; and the voluminous invective with which ſhe received her manumiſſion, at once juſtified it, and leſſened her pupil's ſympathetic pity.

The hour of departure at length arrived; and Elizabeth's firſt conſciouſneſs of her affection to the houſe ſhe was quitting, then ſmote on her heart. With what indifference do we ſeem to ourſelves to have regarded that, which at the moment of ſeparation it is agony to relinquiſh! Every thing that Elizabeth looked on, appeared to her in a new and remarkable form; and by the regret it excited, it ſeemed to ſpeak the language of reproach for her abandoning the ſcenes of her youth.

She

She was forced to break away from theſe ideas, and from the adieus of the ſervants, who with demonſtrations, not very flattering to the ſuperior miſtreſs of the manſion, intercepted her in her way to the carriage, and with doubtful geſtures and *deſpairing* hopes, wiſhed her all the happineſs ſhe deſerved, as the greateſt good they could wiſh her.

CHAP. V.

THE variety of the road, and thoſe common occurrences which Elizabeth's life of retirement rendered uncommon to her, by ſupplying her with new ideas, in ſome meaſure diſpelled the extreme gloom of her mind; and the exertions ſhe thought it due to Lady Jemima, who was wrapped in profound reverie, to make for her amuſement, anſwered the better purpoſe of excluding painful preſages from her own mind. Her ladyſhip was ſingularly obliging during the whole courſe of the journey; and on her arrival at her houſe in Merrion-Square, ſhe introduced her *protegée*, to the Miſs Byrams in a manner that obliged them to put on civil airs.

The very firſt buſineſs Lady Jemima diſpatched, while her ſervants were ſent to the mantua-maker, milliner, &c. &c.

was to write to her intimate friend Mrs. Haccombe. The ſubject ſhe wrote on will be beſt explained by her own words; but firſt let us premiſe who this lady was.

Mrs. Haccombe was the eldeſt daughter of a half-pay lieutenant in the marines, of a noble family, and who, though not near enough to bear the *creſcent* or the *ſtar*, was not a little proud of the *fleur de lys*. In truth, his pedigree and his affinities were ſore grievances to his very narrow income; but he was happy in them; and in a ſituation that may not unaptly be compared to that of a pedeſtrian, who enjoys enough of the partnerſhip of an umbrella to catch all its drippings, he was very poor and very vain: the principal bond of union between him and the noble family he had the honor to be related to, was the friendſhip of a lady who was kept by the grandee; and by dint of ſubmiſſion and flattery, he had gained ſuch intereſt with this im-

perious dame, that ſhe forgot him as a relation of his lordſhip's, (which might not have furthered his ſucceſs) and took him under her peculiar protection. She had a ſiſter who was in the ſame ſituation as herſelf with an Eaſt-India governor; and ſetting this engine and my lord's authority to work on the nabob, ſhe procured for the eldeſt of the lieutenant's many daughters, a degree of patronage that amounted to fitting her out expenſively for the Bengal market, procuring her a paſſage thither, and recommendations of the firſt reſpectability to the inhabitants and rulers of that other world.

The young lady was ſhewy in her perſon, eaſy in her temper, and ſufficiently forward in her manners; and ſo delighted was ſhe with the opportunity offered her of ſeeing foreign countries, that ſhe broke off two or three coquettiſh amours which ſhe had begun at boarding ſchool, and continued by the intervention of the maid; and

and bending her thoughts wholly to oriental conquests, she grafted the character of a fine lady so inartificially upon a mind which no application could inform, no example could improve, nor any restriction correct, that nothing but her excessive confidence could prevent those interested for her from fearing her return upon their hands; and nothing but the unrestrained license of her tongue kept them from animadverting on her singularities.

But, deaf to every gentle hint, and intoxicated by the expence lavished on her, and the certainty of matrimony and wealth, she played over every air of folly, while she blest England with her presence, and then shewed how much wiser she was in the path of promotion, than all those who had shrunk from her example; for, notwithstanding it had been thought that the governor had seen her with eyes of not unreturned affection; and though the captain of the ship had been driven from his post in her heart

heart by a young enſign who was going on the forlorn hope of reformation, or rather tranſportation, ſhe on her landing, captivated by her European complexion the ſun-burnt heart of Mr. Haccombe, a gentleman, who having married and buried an Engliſh wife, and ſettled about half a ſcore of a mulatto progeny, was now about to return home with the reputation of immenſe wealth, got nobody knew how, the tatters of a broken conſtitution, and a conſcience which had ſeen ſtill harder ſervice; and in the following year, he brought home his wife, whom nothing but the hope of dazzling all England, reconciled to quitting the bliſsful lazineſs of a palanquin. Here her uneaſineſſes and complaints were endleſs—nothing was comparable to the delight and ſplendor ſhe had quitted: Mr. Haccombe, whoſe paſſion for the Indies long acquaintance had abated, was better ſatisfied every day with old England, and leſs ſo every hour with his wife. His lady, who retained her

her perſonal attractions, and having united herſelf to wealth, ſought now the diſtinctions of rank and high life, found amuſement in that kind of flirtation with young men of faſhion and title, which may end innocently or otherwiſe, at the diſcretion of the parties.

In town Mrs. Haccombe lived in all the enormity of expence her huſband's reputed wealth, and her enormous vanity afforded. He was blown up with importance, and felt a degree of ſweet complacency reſulting from the compliments his lady's taſte in her routs, her balls, her ſuppers, her converſations, her concerts, her dejeunés, her nonſenſe, and her profuſion, procured him. At their ſeat in the country, he brow-beat, and ſhe inſulted all the neighbourhood. His game, his fiſheries, and the inſertion of his name in the commiſſion of the peace for the county, were nuiſances alike to the poor and the rich, while Mrs. Haccombe's ſucceſſion of finery, and the reports

reports of her domeſtic prodigality, turned the heads of all the girls in the pariſh, and made many a wife, who would have been properly laborious and patient in her family, idle and ill-humoured. She was at Bath, her favourite ſcene of autumnal recreation, when ſhe received from her old ſchool-fellow this letter above referred to.

" I OUGHT, indeed, to beg you ten thouſand pardons, my deareſt Lucretia, for not having wrote ages ago; but I have been in an abyſs of trouble, and overwhelmed with buſineſs of one kind or another. I ſuppoſe you have ſeen by the papers that Byram is dead—I thought you would have wrote to me upon it; for it has been a ſad ſcene of diſtreſs to me---he has left nothing for me and the girls, ſo if the old gentleman is as croſs as uſual, we ſhall be finely off---I have wrote to him; but have not heard ſince---I wonder how Byram or any body could imagine I could

could ſave fortunes for the girls out of my poor pittance. You know, my Lucretia, how often I have been ſhort of money, notwithſtanding all Sir Clifford's boaſted generoſity to us---but I think I have found out how the money has gone; for I am ſure the little I ſpent could never be felt. But this girl that you have heard me ſpeak of, has, I am ſure, had a great deal laviſhed on her.---It is, by the bye, confidently affirmed by all Byram's ſervants, that ſhe is no child of his; but ſomething muſt be done for her; and I am ſure I cannot do much. I ſhould be glad to be rid of her; for ſhe is not the ſort of perſon either you or I like. Now, it is very much in your power, to aid me in this point---I ſhould like to get her out to the Indies---ſhe might do there very well; for ſhe is of a tolerable perſon, and pretty well accompliſhed, that is to ſay, ſhe has a ſmattering of ſeveral things---we know how that is, when miſſes are called accompliſhed. Now if you would uſe your intereſt with Mr.

Haccombe

Haccombe to get her out, I could fit her out with my own clothes, which would, you know, be too *outré* for me when I am out of mourning. Write to me, dear creature, immediately, and tell me how much you can do to ſerve me; and then I will tell you more at large than I have leiſure now, what are my future plans, and how much I am, my deareſt Lucretia,

Your moſt ſincerely affectionate

JEMIMA BYRAM."

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THIS great affair diſmiſſed from her mind, Lady Jemima proceeded to the regulation of her mourning-accoutrements, in which, though entirely ignorant of the fund that was to defray the expence, habitual negligence of œconomy made her extravagant. Elizabeth too much aſtoniſhed at the novelty of a metropolis, to have the uſe of her faculties, ſubmitted every thing to her arbitrement; and alternately overcome by painful reflections, and rouſed by ſtrange appearances, ſhe felt moſt uncomfortably harraſſed. Lady Jemima at her firſt leiſure after her arrival, ſent to let her know ſhe ſhould be happy to have her company. Elizabeth took her work-bag with her, and attended her ladyſhip, whom ſhe found all ſweetneſs and politeneſs, and whom, notwithſtanding all previous diſguſts, it was impoſſible not to regard with ſome return of affection.

The

The purpoſe of this ſociable invitation, was to ſound Elizabeth's inclination to an Eaſt India voyage. Ignorant as ſhe was of the moſt uſual occurrences of the world, it was not to be expected that ſhe ſhould underſtand the nature of theſe matrimonial expeditions; and to this want of information, Lady Jemima truſted for power to allure her by a dazzling deſcription, which ſhe could not find to be erroneous till the ſea was between them. She therefore began the converſation with telling her that ſhe had that day written in her favor to a friend of her's, and proceeded to give ſuch an account as ſhe thought fit of this lady's origin and ſucceſs in the world; but ſhe found herſelf ſo often interrupted by her auditor's total ignorance of firſt principles, that nothing but her deep intereſt could have prevented a natural habit of peeviſhneſs from ſhewing itſelf; but when ſhe came to — *And ſo her friends thought it beſt to fit her out to make her fortune in India*, Elizabeth was obliged to beg ſome light on

on this curious ſubject. "Why you muſt know, my dear," replied her ladyſhip with ſtudied caution, "that when young women of good families and ſmall fortunes turn out well, if their friends are deſirous that they ſhould make a proper figure in life, they furniſh them with a great quantity of the fineſt cloaths, and get ſome friend to take them over to one of the Engliſh ſettlements in the Eaſt-Indies. You have no idea what pleaſant parties go on ſuch expeditions—perhaps ten or a dozen young ladies in one ſhip; and they take their muſical inſtruments, and their works, and books, and whatever can amuſe them; and the voyage is ſo ſafe and ſo delightful, that every body is in ſuch ſpirits, it is quite charming. Don't you think my dear it muſt be very pleaſant?—Should'nt you like it?" "I dare ſay it may be very agreeable" anſwered Elizabeth, working intently to hide her difference of opinion; "but are the ladies ſtrangers?--the people in the ſhip muſt be; and I have a great averſion to ſtrangers;

ſtrangers; ſo I could not think it pleaſant." "O no," anſwered her ladyſhip, "they are very often a party of friends."--"But *I* have no friends," ſaid Elizabeth with a ſigh; "and I fancy it takes a long time to be a friend---ſo I am ſure I could not like it."--"Well, but my dear, you know it is one reaſon of my bringing you to town, that you ſhould get rid of this ſhyneſs---you have no idea how ſoon people are acquainted, who live in the world; and if the voyage were not as pleaſant as it always is, only think how they are repaid when they get to the end of it."

"But, madam, I have read of ſhips being caſt away, and every perſon on board periſhing."

"O that never happens in that voyage---a great many ſhips go in company; and no accident ever happens."

"Well, but madam, I ſuppoſe then all the young ladies that go have friends in India,

or

or elſe what are they to do when they get there?"

"Why thoſe who have no particular connexions there, have letters of recommendation."

"What? to ſtrangers?" interrupted Elizabeth, ſtaring with aſtoniſhment.

"Yes, miſs, to ſtrangers," retorted Lady Jemima, unable totally to govern her pettiſhneſs, "and you muſt learn, I aſſure you, to accuſtom yourſelf to ſtrangers---or how do you think I am to provide for you?"

"I thought, madam," replied the frighted girl, with tears of terror ſtarting in her eyes, you meant to introduce me to ſome good lady of your acquaintance, with whom I ſhould by degrees become intimate, and that then ſhe would take me to be uſeful to her; and I might come and ſee you very often, till I was quite ſettled."

Settled

"*Settled* indeed," muttered her ladyſhip, "that would be a fine way of getting *you* ſettled.---But do you not think, my dear," continued ſhe in a tone rather more guarded, "it muſt be a charming thing for a girl, without any fortune, as ſoon as ſhe arrives in India, to be married to a man worth millions of money, and who would maintain her in all the ſtate of a princeſs, in a country where they live in a ſtyle juſt like what you have read of in fairy tales, where every thing is of gold and diamonds?"

"Pray, madam," anſwered Elizabeth with a look of modeſt apprehenſion, "forgive my ignorance; but how can they get married if they know nobody?"

"O, my dear, the eaſieſt thing in the world. When the ſhips arrive, the gentlemen of the country come to church, I believe to ſee the ladies; and they fix on thoſe they like beſt to make their offers."

"But

" But then how can they love them ?"

" Love them, child? What nonſenſe !"

" But ſurely, madam, it is impoſſible for any woman to marry a man ſhe does not love--- and beſide how can the gentleman tell whether the lady is good tempered, and ſuch a perſon as he thinks would make him happy? I ſuppoſe they muſt wait a long time before they are married."

" How like a ſimpleton you talk ! Elizabeth, do you think it neceſſary that all people ſhould love one another before they are married? or that a man muſt have known his wife from her cradle, to judge whether he likes her ? No no, as to love, it comes of itſelf afterwards ; and if it never comes, a woman muſt be very imprudent if ſhe is unhappy; and people who live in the world have a certain penetration about them that enables them to judge of one another at the firſt ſight."

" Then

"Then that is the reaſon I ſuppoſe, madam, that the world is called *cenſorious*, becauſe it does not ſtay to be well acquainted---now, I am ſure, if I were to pretend to judge at firſt, I ſhould often have been miſtaken already; for I could never have thought your ladyſhip would have been half ſo kind as you are to me, if I had formed an opinion when I was a little girl; but then, indeed, I was but a child, and now I know nothing of the world; but I am ſure if I were to live ever ſo long, I could not marry any body I did not love."

"But how do you know you ſhould not love the perſon who might be willing to marry you?"

"O I muſt have loved him before I ever thought of his marrying me---And beſide, only think what it muſt be to go amongſt ſtrangers, to be looked at juſt like the horſes, when dear Mr. Byram was going to buy one for me---I remember ſaying to

to my poor governeſs when my father was looking at their eyes and at their teeth, that I wondered the horſes could ſtand to be ſtared at without bluſhing; and I think the ladies going to India muſt be juſt like the horſes."

Lady Jemima found the matter muſt be puſhed no farther in this way; and to form an advantageous contraſt to what ſhe had been repreſenting, ſhe deſcribed in no very tempting colours the dependent ſituation of governeſs, which was the alternative; but ſhe found her young ruſtic proof againſt all the terrors ſhe could depict; and anſwering all by a ſummary ſuppoſition that ſhe ſhould lead the life of her firſt governeſs, who, ſhe was ſatisfied, would on no conſideration have quitted her, ſhe warded off all the diſcontent the craft of her ſuperior would have inoculated on her ſimple mind, and ſhewed that ſhe preferred infinitely induſtry and quiet to idleneſs and ſplendor.

The delay neceſſary in preparing Lady Jemima's funereal decorations kept her at home, and the melancholy which ſtill overſpread the mind and features of Elizabeth, damped the curioſity Dublin might otherwiſe have excited. No viſitors came; the young ladies and their mama were not fond of each other's company: her ladyſhip therefore often had Elizabeth for her companion, by whoſe good ſenſe and acquired knowledge it was impoſſible for her not to be entertained while her *naivetè* and perfect ignorance of cities, afforded her no ſmall diverſion.

The Miſs Byrams were by no means to be rendered familiar or even ſociable: the eldeſt was by nature ſtupid, froward, indocile, and ill-tempered; the youngeſt a forward ſuſceptible girl, with no ideas but thoſe of tender paſſions and clandeſtine marriages. They felt their own inferiority, and hated their half ſiſter for it, who, on the contrary, finding the young ladies mere

mere babes in knowledge, and as malicious as ever to her, conſidered that ſhe muſt be a very dull companion, and not chuſing to be their ſport, left them to their purſuits.

In a week of impriſonment Lady Jemima retained ſufficient command of herſelf to miſlead Elizabeth into a firm opinion of her friendſhip; and in that which followed ſhe extended her indulgence ſo far as to take her with her, when, with all the ſtate of widowhood, ſhe went for her airings on the circular road, and amongſt the beautiful varieties of the Phœnix park. Novel as was every ſcene to the immured girl, ſhe was forced to guard her heart againſt the attachment thoſe pleaſures were cementing, and to recollect that it was her lot to quit them, as ſoon as her *anxious friend* ſhould have found for her a mode of life better ſuited to her humble fortunes.

Mrs. Haccombe was not as punctual as ſhe might have been in her return to her *chere amie*'s requeſt; but ſhe was perhaps as punctual as ſo fine a lady held it neceſſary to be: for ſhe wrote *at her very firſt leiſure*. Before her anſwer arrived, Lady Jemima had a brief and rather a ſullen one from her father-in-law, in which he reproached her with her culpable conduct, but ſaid he would think of ſome method of ſettling his ſon's affairs. But a letter of far more ſeeming importance was brought to her on the third ſunday after ſhe came home. It was evening, and ſhe was yawning with *ennui* at home, while Elizabeth was reading to her. Her countenence changed remarkably as ſoon as ſhe had opened the letter. In a ſharp tone of voice ſhe diſmiſſed Elizabeth to her own apartment, with orders to remain there till ſhe was ſent for; and then ſat down to anſwer the moſt embarraſſing epiſtle ſhe had ever received.

CHAP. VII.

Let us leave her ladyſhip deep in meditation; and poor Elizabeth, frighted at her capricious diſmiſſion, ſitting on her bed, weeping over the miniatures of her father and mother, recollecting Dennis's incredible aſſertion, and deploring her cheerleſs ſituation; and let us turn our attention to her patient injured mother.

Inflexible to thoſe repreſentations and to thoſe urgent offers of protection, with which at firſt Lord Armathwaite's letters to her were filled, ſhe forced him to give up the conteſted point, and to ſubmit to the barrier placed between them.—On no other terms would ſhe maintain any intercourſe with him; and as he ſaw that her refuſal to take any ſtep that might have liberated her, aroſe not from any abatement of attachment,

ment, but from a reverence to the inſtitution that had made her Byram's wife, and from a regard to the intereſt and eſtimation of her daughter, he endeavoured to reſtrain his paſſion, in proportion as his adoration of her virtues increaſed, and found ſome ſatisfaction in the confidence ſhe repoſed in him.

She had the conſolation of ſeeing Mrs. Halnaby as much at eaſe, as her fond anxiety for her would permit. She was not arrived yet at old age, and Joanna flattered herſelf that a long and cheerful autumn of life would reward her friend for her early ſufferings.

The retirement in which they lived, and which was varied only by viſits to Canterbury, by excurſions about the country, and by the temporary reſidence of a ſmall ſucceſſion of valuable friends, afforded Mrs. Halnaby the quiet ſhe loved, and Joanna thoſe means of purſuing the attainment of knowledge

ledge her education had denied her; and it was only in the ſoothing converſation of her protecting friend, or in a very cloſe application to ſuch ſtudies as fill the mind, that ſhe could lull her inquietude reſpecting her daughter. At firſt, after her ſeparation from her, ſhe had frequently ventured ſo far, as to write to Byram, ſupplicating intelligence of her; but it was never to be obtained; for early after his marriage he was under the error of ſuppoſing Jemima's conduct culpable; and when this idea died on his imagination; and his melancholy love got the better of his ſuſpicion; he felt every renewed remembrance of her ſo painful, that he ſhunned all communication, and found it eaſieſt in general to ſtrive to be indifferent!

Thus had Joanna lived; having undergone a change of anxiety, without the leaſt diminution, but rather with an aggravation of mental diſtreſs. In her youth

youth ſhe had ſuffered cruelty, ſhe had feared poverty; and a hopeleſs paſſion had preyed on her. Now ſhe experienced every comfort that kindneſs could beſtow; ſhe knew herſelf, in caſe of Mrs. Halnaby's death, ſole heireſs to a fortune which her contracted mode of life accumulated every year to an amount more than equal to the injury it had ſuſtained by young Halnaby's extravagance. Her attachment to Lord Armathwaite, though unalterable, was mellowed into friendſhip; yet ſtill ſhe was miſerable, whenever her too prompt recollection turned on Elizabeth's doubtful fate.

Lord Armathwaite had ſoon grown weary of the buſtle in which he had hoped to loſe the memory of former diſtreſſes; and quitting his army connexions, had retired into Switzerland. His affairs occaſionally drew him to England; and he then always viſited Mrs. Halnaby; but he carefully avoided every place where it

was

was likely he might meet Byram or his ſiſter, whoſe conduct, for cauſes very different, but equally ſtrong, he deteſted.

But he could not remain in entire ignorance or perfect apathy reſpecting them. He was in London when the newſpapers informed him of Byram's death; and, inſtantaneouſly looking forward to the conſequences of this joyful emancipation, he ſet off for Chatham, whence he was but juſt arrived. Joanna was frightened at the precipitancy of his return, and at the furious vivacity of his countenance when he bounced into the room where ſhe was ſitting alone. He had ſcarcely breath to articulate a word, or recollection to preface what he had to tell, by compoſing his features. He ſeized her hand in ſilence, and only pointing out to her the article in the newſpaper, which he had brought in his hand, he daſhed into a chair, and became ſo agitated, that Joanna, neglecting that

which would have expounded the myſtery, addreſſed herſelf only to learn what had ſo hurried him.

Fearing ſomething had ſhaken the dominion he had obtained over himſelf with regard to her, and that ſhe might on his recovery be forced to hear ſtill more urgent ſolicitations than thoſe he had ceaſed to uſe; ſhe rang the bell, and requeſted Mrs. Halnaby might be told lord Armathwaite was arrived and unwell.--"No, no," ſaid he, ſtarting up with aſſumed firmneſs; "I am not ill."---He waited till the ſervant had ſhut the door, and then energetically added, "I am, my Joanna, either the happieſt or the moſt miſerable man on earth.--See here," continued he, ſnatching up the paper with violence, "that wretch Byram is at length dead; and after eighteen years of deſpair, you are now, my Joanna, mine. Contradict me, and you never ſee me more.---I have waited---I have ſued---I have yielded" ſaid he, after a pauſe ſhe could

could not interrupt,--- " but I have ſtill firmly, as when firſt I told you ſo, loved and adored you---Heaven grants you to me;--- let us then repay ourſelves for the cruel ſacrifices we have made to honor and to duty.—O be my advocate" continued he to Mrs. Halnaby, who now haſtily entered the room,---" plead, as you have heretofore done, my cauſe with Joanna;--- but add to your arguments that ſhe is now at liberty, and that ſhe ought to reward the fidelity with which I have loved her.---"

It was unintelligible to Joanna's friend; but ſhe, whom the frequent deceptions of fortune had early taught to poſſeſs herſelf, anſwered, inſtead of Mrs. Halnaby,--- "You want no advocate with me, lord Armathwaite:---be compoſed,---the days of violent paſſion ſhould be over with both of us. I have, I hope, acted reaſonably, and you ſhall find me reaſonable; but

for

for Heaven's ſake be yourſelf, or you alarm me."

"Can I be myſelf," he replied mournfully, "and think that after the diſappointment of my early love for you, after I had myſelf blaſted all my proſpect, after waiting thus long, and ſeeing you wretched beyond remedy, you may ſtill, ſtill refuſe me the privilege I aſk, of ſharing your ſorrow if I cannot alleviate it? Give me a father's intereſt in Elizabeth.---Byram is dead; and no one has a right to withhold her:---I will ſeek her;---I will find her---if ſhe lives, ſhe ſhall be reſtored to you. We will cheriſh her as our beſt hope---O my Joanna! give me a title to protect you."

The tears burſt from Joanna's eyes; and Mrs. Halnaby interpoſed to ſtop the furious and incoherent language which the fermentation of his mind during the journey,

journey, dictated. She ſucceeded in calming him; and taking Joanna away, that her ſpirits might not farther ſuffer by his impetuoſity, ſhe calmly diſcuſſed with her the ſteps ſhe meant now to take.

She found her reaſon and her inclination both advocates for her marrying lord Armathwaite; but ſo ſtrongly oppoſed by her anxiety about Elizabeth, which the death of her only protector had now revived with greater force than ever, that till it was abated by ſome authentic information, either of her death or welfare, ſhe could bend her mind to no other ſubject.---On her return therefore to lord Armathwaite, whoſe fears during her abſence had defeated Mrs. Halnaby's deſign of rendering him more rational, ſhe frankly told him there was now but one obſtacle to her conſenting, in a ſhort time, to marry him; and that this was the doubtful fate of Elizabeth.---Could

he

he by any means bring her under the protection of her now ſole parent, or could he aſcertain her fully of her death or comfortable ſettlement, ſhe ſhould feel it her indiſpenſable duty to reward, as far as was in her power, the very generous attachment he had manifeſted to her.

CHAP. VIII.

It was this one impediment, which lord Armathwaite had too much humanity to treat lightly—it was this duty of ſeeking and finding Elizabeth, which occaſioned lady Jemima Byram the diſturbance ſhe received from the letter brought to her: for it was from her brother, who in kind terms profeſſed his concern for her ſituation, and offered her his ſervices, with an intimation that he was in Dublin, and ſhould call on her the next morning on buſineſs of importance.

Lady Jemima did not exactly know what this buſineſs would prove; but concluding that it could be only an inveſtigation of her affairs, ſhe foreſaw the diſappointment of all her hopes from Sir Clifford, when it ſhould be no longer a ſecret, that ſhe had made away with the ſeparate fortune ſhe had with ſo much avidity ſecured to her-

ſelf

ſelf on her marriage. As objects of *charity* he might relieve her and her daughters by an allowance of two or three hundred pounds a year each; but far inferior was this generoſity to the advantage ſhe had promiſed herſelf, ever ſince Sir Clifford had given her to underſtand that he would intereſt himſelf in the arrangement of his ſon's affairs. By experience, ſhe knew Sir Clifford to have a warm heart, and ſhe believed a weak head---ſhe remembered the power ſhe once had over him; and her imagination, always diſpoſed to extremes, bid her not doubt that ſhe ſhould be able to reſume it. It was her viſionary plan to prevail on him to return to Dublin, to which city he was, as a native, attached, and where he had built the very excellent houſe Byram had hitherto lived in. Should ſhe ſucceed in this, to quarter herſelf and her daughters on him was no great difficulty: ſhe could then more effectually guard againſt his marrying again, which ſhe had now and then feared, and more than ever

dreaded; and ſhe could keep up appearances with regard to herſelf till ſhe ſhould bring ſome matrimonial ſcheme to perfection, when ſhe reſolved to leave the old gentleman and his grand-daughter to take care of themſelves, and to ſet out herſelf anew in the circle of celebrity.

A plan ſo well concerted, it was pity to ſee fruſtrated by the officious interpoſition of lord Armathwaite, to whom ſhe felt no tie either of gratitude or nature. She affected to conſider him as coming in the character of a ſpy and an informer; and ſhe reſolved to keep him at a diſtance. For this good purpoſe, her ladyſhip, after much rumination, anſwered his billet in a ſtyle of polite reſentment, intimating that his long alienation of himſelf from her, was not unnoticed, and requeſting before ſhe made any appointment, that ſhe might know what particular buſineſs had procured the unexpected honor of his attention.

An

An anſwer was returned almoſt immediately, from the houſe of a friend, where he was, ſignifying, in terms of greater forbearance than lady Jemima had a right to expect, that the moſt urgent buſineſs he came on was to enquire after a relation of the late Mr. Byram's, with whoſe intereſt he was particularly charged. More than this he thought it not prudent to ſay, till he ſhould know how far his ſiſter had been in her huſband's confidence.

The crafty widow felt relieved on one point; but her fears on another, no leſs important, were increaſed. She hoped; but it was almoſt a deſperate hope, that the report of Byram's previous marriage was not true, if it proved true, ſhe hoped her brother was not aware of it.—All this was the mere conjecture of artificial incredulity; and how to act, it was difficult even for her prompt wit to determine. At length, conſidering that to exaſperate lord Armathwaite would be to hurry on what ſhe much wiſhed to protract,

ſhe

ſhe ſat down to write an acquieſcent billet; but ſhe could find no words to pleaſe her: ſhe therefore gave the ſervant a verbal meſſage that ſhe ſhould be glad to ſee his lordſhip in the morning.

She ſent no more for Elizabeth that evening: her mind was too deeply engroſſed to want amuſement. She had, it is true, but one point to carry—this was to ſecure as much as poſſible of her father-in-law's property to herſelf and her children. To this the excluſion of Elizabeth appeared neceſſary; for it never entered her crooked imagination, that a generous protection of an injured girl, and an appeal to Sir Clifford's juſtice and humanity, would have had juſt as good an effect, and by much ſhorter means. Cunning loves a labyrinth, and leaves the high road for wiſdom.

The whole night was devoted to cogitation and projection; and ſhe roſe in the morning

morning with a plan fully arranged in her mind, by which ſhe might not only ward off the danger of Elizabeth's being ſet up as Mr. Byram's eldeſt daughter, but effectually provide for one of her own girls. All depended on lord Armathwaite's coming with a diſpoſition very favourable to Elizabeth, who, ſhe doubted not, was meant by *the relation* he had alluded to.

Previous to his viſit, Elizabeth received a meſſage from lady Jemima, civilly enquiring after her, and begging that, as ſhe was going to be particularly engaged, ſhe would not leave her apartment till ſhe again ſent to her. The unſuſpicious dupe of this artifice was too well aware of her own ignorance to admit wonder or curioſity to diſturb her; and on no conſideration would ſhe have diſobeyed even the *implied* commands of lady Jemima.

Lord Armathwaite came, and introduced himſelf to his ſiſter with an aſpect of forgiveneſs

giveneſs and reconciliation, which ſhe returned by diſtant civility and affected condeſcenſion. He expreſſed kindly his concern for the unprotected ſituation ſhe was left in; and again offered his ſervices: he then cautiouſly aſked her if ſhe had ever known any thing of a *young woman*, as he might call her, whom Mr. Byram had, very early in life, taken under his care.

" You mean Elizabeth, I preſume," replied her ladyſhip, with a well counterfeited ſmile—" Mr. Byram's natural daughter."

" Mr. Byram's *daughter*, I certainly mean," anſwered his lordſhip, with an emphaſis his auditor did not chooſe to notice.

" Well," replied lady Jemima, with affected vivacity, " what have you to ſay about Elizabeth?—ſhe is with me, if you wiſh to ſee her."

" Is

" Is ſhe?" aſked lord Armathwaite: " then for heaven's ſake let me ſee her—deliver her to my care, I will conduct her to her mother; and I ſhall then be happy."

" *You* be happy if I deliver Elizabeth to you?" replied his ſiſter. " Pray how are you and Elizabeth and happineſs connected."

" By the moſt ſacred of all ties," anſwered he—" by the ſincereſt love for her angelic mother, who has ſuffered all that cruelty could inflict, with the patient reſignation of a martyred ſaint.—I am ſent to ſeek her daughter, and ſhe herſelf is to be my reward if I find her."

Lady Jemima's features were ſet ready to have expreſſed volubly her wonder and indignation at this warmth of attachment to a woman ſhe would have deſpiſed had ſhe dared, but her brother earneſtly conjuring her without delay to give up Elizabeth to him,

him, ſhe made her feelings yield to her cunning, and affecting the utmoſt candor, ſhe told lord Armathwaite, after due preparation, and with the moſt ſolemn injunctions to ſecrecy, that there were particulars reſpecting Elizabeth, which as he ſo warmly eſpouſed her intereſt, it was fit he ſhould be acquainted with, though at preſent herſelf was the only perſon privy to them. She then with an air and tone of voice that completed the deception, began as follows:

" Your unkind abſenting yourſelf from me, my dear brother, has kept you totally ignorant of all the domeſtic occurrences of my family; but I hope in future we ſhall be on better terms. You do not know my two daughters, or the uneaſineſs the conduct of the eldeſt has already, young as ſhe is, given me. I believe, indeed, it contributed to haſten her poor father's death." The tears rolled from lady Jemima's crocodile eyes--Lord Armathwaite was moved,

—ſhe

—ſhe ſaw ſucceſs hovering over her plan: and ſhe proceeded.

This untoward girl, beautiful in her perſon, and a prodigy of underſtanding, almoſt from her cradle, gave ſigns of the worſt diſpoſition. She and Elizabeth, and my youngeſt daughter were brought up together; and I believe neither their father nor myſelf ever made much difference in our affection for them; but, for what cauſe I know not, my eldeſt girl took the moſt unnatural diſlike poſſible to me—ſo far as, in her frequent fits of paſſion, to endanger my life. Mr. Byram was extremely unhappy about it, and thought the beſt means to tame the violence of her ſpirit, and her exceſſive pride, was to keep her in the north, and to bring her up on a plan of mortification. Hitherto his ſweet little Elizabeth had been kept there for the benefit of her delicate health; and as the purpoſe of re-eſtabliſhing it, was happily anſwered, I thought that if my own girl was

to

to be thus cut off from our family, it would be for Elizabeth's advantage and our comfort to make an exchange of them—thus to bring up *my* daughter as Mr. Byram's natural child, and Elizabeth as *my* daughter. Byram thought himſelf obliged to me for this attention to his girl; and diſmiſſing ſuch ſervants as were likely to thwart our deſigns, and keeping the children all together at Balla-craig for ſome time, we carried our ſcheme into execution, and Elizabeth is here now and knows herſelf only as Jemima Byram. The weakneſs of her conſtitution has a little impeded her growth, and hurt her figure; ſo that ſhe appears hardly by two years ſo old as ſhe is; but ſhe is a very honeſt girl. As for my own, I am ſorry to ſay her conduct has been every day growing worſe. Byram adviſed me before his death to place her at a diſtance from me; but I could not have conſented to it, had I not diſcovered ſuch a ſcene of iniquity as aſtoniſhed me. For ſome cauſe that I could not fathom, ſhe choſe to leave the apartment where ſhe and

her governeſs uſually ſlept, and while her father was unburied, to occupy a chamber that obliged her to paſs through that where his body lay. Imagining that it might be from melancholy affection, which ſhe was to ſullen to own, that ſhe made this ſtrange choice, I took no notice of it, till I heard a report originating from her that the houſe was haunted. I did not like ſuch an idle notion to get into the heads of the ſervants; ſo I ſet her governeſs to watch her; and we found that her viſits to the chamber where the body was laid out, and her ſtories of ghoſts, were only calculated to forward n d conceal an intercourſe ſhe maintained with one of her father's men-ſervants. I had then no option—I was forced to think of ſecuring her reputation, if I could not her morality. I therefore embraced an offer made me by a very worthy friend of mine to get her out to the Indies; and ſhe ſet out yeſterday.

Lady

Lady Jemima ſeemed ſo affected with the neceſſity of expoſing her daughter's foibles, that lord Armathwaite ſuſpended his curioſity, to conſole her. She ſtruggled againſt her *maternal* feelings, and ringing for a ſervant, deſired Miſs Byram might be called down ſtairs. Miſs, who had heard that there was a *lord* in the drawing-room with her mamma, and who was as conceited as her natural folly and her education could render her, would not ſtir without a previous adjuſtment at the glaſs; and in the interim her uncle, whoſe heart expanded with his proſpect, and melted at the idea of his ſiſter's ſufferings, had opened to her his intentions, declared fully Joanna's legal claim on Mr. Byram; and to her great relief had explicitly aſſured her that, as his fortune was much more than equal to any want a family might produce, both he and Elizabeth's mother, whom her ladyſhip ſeemed vaſtly happy to recollect as the beautiful Miſs Doveridge, meant to provide for the

young woman independently of any claim on her father's family. Lady Jemima ſtill affecting to conſider Elizabeth as the illegitimate offspring of her huſband, commended this as prudent; but ſhe was too wiſe to acknowledge it as an obligation. She talked her brother into a belief, that whatever follies ſhe had been tainted with, had departed with her youth, and they were in perfect good humour with each other, when Miſs Byram, with all her charms about her, introduced herſelf.

Lord Armathwaite in the joy of ſeeing the child of his beloved Joanna, forgot the obliquity of her form, and the character impreſſed on her features; and with a degree of rapture that might have been excuſed, was eagerly going to claſp her to his boſom, when in a mouthing tone of voice, accompanied by an incorrigible liſp, the young lady deſired him to keep *hith handth* off. He ſtarted back, as if conſcious that he was wrong. Lady Jemima coloured

coloured with vexation; but to keep up her affectionate character, ſhe gently told *her dear girl*, that lord Armathwaite was happy to ſee her, and meant only to expreſs his affection. "I thought," replied Miſs, he *wath* going to *kith* me; and that my *governeth thaithe ith* not *fathionable*." "Well, my dear, you are right to be cautious; but here you need not be afraid," anſwered lady Jemima, deſirous to ſtop her daughter's tongue, which the ſight of a lord had made uncommonly fluent; for in general ſhe preſerved a ſullen ſilence; and to this, which might have been excuſed as modeſty, her mother had truſted for ſome part of her ſucceſs.

However difficult the ſtubborn ſpirit of the young lady might render it to get her acquieſcence to the plan, lady Jemima well knew it would carry the appearance of natural unwillingneſs to quit her home: ſhe therefore had forborne tutoring her. It had been agreed by her ladyſhip and lord Armathwaite

Armathwaite that ſhe ſhould be informed of her error in ſuppoſing lady Jemima her mother, which, as ſhe was fifteen years of age, ſhe might be preſumed capable of comprehending; and lord Armathwaite by coaxing, by perſuaſion, and by endeavouring to render her familiar with him, hoped to induce her to return with him to England.

But Miſs Byram rendered all forethought uſeleſs: When told that ſhe was not to conſider lady Jemima, but a ſtranger to whom ſhe was to be introduced, as her parent, ſhe anſwered pouting, "Well, I hope *the* won't be *tho croth.*" She next enquired who it was that was to be her mamma; and Lady Jemima, judging of her daughter's diſpoſition by her own, replied---"She will be, when you ſee her, or ſoon after, counteſs of Armathwaite, and my ſiſter,"---"I don't care *whooth thithter the ith*," ſays Miſs, "if *the ith* a *perthon* of rank, and will let me have *fathcuable clothe*, and *ath much money ath I like.*"

Lord

Lord Armathwaite could no longer flatter himſelf that with her child, he ſhould reſtore happineſs to Joanna; and lady Jemima ſeeing his diſappointment and vexation, obſerved, that Elizabeth, though deficient perhaps in elegant accompliſhments, was of an excellent diſpoſition. He ſcarcely knew how to take his ſiſter's word; but recollecting that the affection ſhe had expreſſed for this unpromiſing chit, implied nothing but her own good-nature, he could not juſtly look on himſelf as deceived by her, however he felt mortified.

The reward he awaited at the end of his journey was a ſtimulus to his diſpatch; but when he turned his eyes on Miſs Byram, he thought he could ſcarcely in carrying ſuch a creature with him, claim the performance of Joanna's promiſe. He reſolved, nevertheleſs, on embarking as quickly as he could, and a packet ſailing the next morning, mamma, who was eager as he

he could be, for his departure, promiſed Miſs ſhould be ready to attend him. It was judged proper to keep the matter ſecret, out of a due regard to Mr. Byram's reputation and the pretended Miſs Byram; and lord Armathwaite ſpent the remainder of this day in an excurſion into the next county, on buſineſs.

Theſe precious hours were employed by Lady Jemima in preparing Miſs for the journey. To prevent her betraying the plot, ſhe told her ſhe was now going to a lady who would indulge her in every thing, provided ſhe did not, before ſhe arrived at the end of her journey, diſcloſe the purpoſe of it. The young lady had craft enough to ſecure her tongue. A maid-ſervant newly hired was appointed to attend her, juſt as far as acroſs the water; and ſhe embarked, nothing loth, with lord Armathwaite the next morning, leaving lady Jemima in better hopes than ever of re-ſettling herſelf on the eſtabliſhment of

ma-

matrimony, now that one of her two incumbrances was removed. To ſecure Elizabeth a priſoner to her chamber till Miſs Byram was departed, her ladyſhip magnified into importance a head-ach the unfortunate girl complained of---ſhe found out that ſhe had a great deal of fever and many alarming ſymptoms, which would make it neceſſary ſhe ſhould confine herſelf for two or three days.

CHAP. IX.

The Engliſh mail came in, ſoon after lord Armathwaite and his *lovely charge* had ſailed; and a letter came by it from Mrs. Haccombe, in which ſhe told her dear friend, that ſhe could immediately get the young perſon ſhe mentioned out to India, if ſhe would ſend her over. She was then going to London, where ſhe would meet her and take the whole buſineſs on herſelf.

It would have been convenient to have ſent Elizabeth over under the protection of lord Armathwaite; but this would have been a fatal ſtep. Lady Jemima therefore caſt about for ſome other means; and when ſhe had ſettled the matter in her own mind, ſhe ſent for Elizabeth, and told her that

that ſhe had that day received a letter from her friend, who would be very glad of her company and aſſiſtance, till ſhe ſhould find a ſituation ſhe liked better. Elizabeth curtſied; but recollecting the converſation ſhe had held with her ladyſhip ſome days before, ſhe begged to be aſſure d that at was not her deſign to ſend her amongſt ſtrangers to the Indies.---Lady Jemima was not prepared for this reſiſtance, which was expreſſed with uncommon firmneſs, Recollecting fortunately for her that, by the time the ſhip reached its deſtination, the paſſengers would no longer be *ſtrangers* to Elizabeth, ſhe availed herſelf of this wretched ſubterfuge, and replied with a confident negative.

To have fitted her out in a ſtyle calculated for the land of venal matrimony, would have been productive of two important evils, the one that ſuch preparation would have rendered her ſuſpicious, and probably obſtinate: the other, that it would

would have put lady Jemima's patience and hypocriſy to a farther trial, by retaining her in her ſight. It was therefore more prudent to diſpatch her to England, and ſend what her ladyſhip intended as a frugal ſubſtitute for ſplendor, by ſome following ſhip; and on this, as on every meaſure in uniſon with her own intereſt, ſhe reſolved.

Elizabeth's melancholy was but little increaſed by the proſpect of a removal. She had accuſtomed herſelf to think ſhe muſt earn her living; and grateful as ſhe felt to lady Jemima for her ſuppoſed kindneſs, ſhe had lately perceived ſuch ſymptoms of returning ill-temper, as kept her on her guard and in fear. In her ignorance of the world, ſhe could fancy no ſituation for herſelf, but that of governeſs to perhaps one or two young ladies, whom ſhe pictured as models of perfection: ſhe only dreaded her own inability; but ſhe conſidered that due allowances muſt, in juſ-

tice, be made for a want of experience ſhe meant not to diſguiſe; and ſhe promiſed herſelf, that by diligent attention ſhe could in time atone for this deficiency. The moſt formidable part of her proſpect was the neceſſity of going among ſtrangers; but this nicety ſhe repreſſed as unbecoming her dependence.

Whatever were her feelings, they prevented her ſleeping that night, but ſhe met lady Jemima with tolerable compoſure at the breakfaſt table in the morning; and enquiring for Miſs Byram, was told to her ſurpriſe, that ſhe was gone to England on a viſit to her uncle. Another queſtion ſhe dared not hazard; for this anſwer was delivered with all that contraction of countenance with which uſurped right impoſes ſilence. Deterred by this mute menace, ſhe turned her thoughts towards herſelf, and begged ſome inſtruction as to the ſituation ſhe was to be placed in, and the duties that would be required of her.

I ſup-

" I ſuppoſe if Mrs. Haccombe is ſo good as to let me be with her, ſhe will expect me to employ myſelf in ſome way for her. Does your ladyſhip know whether ſhe has any daughters?"

" No, ſhe has no children. Mrs. Haccombe means to keep you with her, out of friendſhip to me, till ſhe ſees what you are fit for: and till you have acquired a little of the manners of the world; for I aſſure you, child, thoſe ſtarched airs and that affection of diffidence you have about you, will never recommend you---you muſt learn to think and act like other people, or you will never ſucceed like them---take my word for it."

" I cannot expect indeed," anſwered Elizabeth, while tears of mortification filled her eyes, " that I ſhould be fit for any thing yet, juſt taken as I am from a confined ſituation."

" A *con-*

" A *confined* ſituation indeed! Miſs---pray what ſituation muſt you have to pleaſe you?---What I ſuppoſe you expected that I ſhould be plagued with you and your accompliſhments, and that you were to be treated juſt like one of the Miſs Byrams---no, I thank you; I had plague enough with your father---I did not want any of his illegitimate dependents."

" Have I offended your ladyſhip?"---aſked Elizabeth trembling---" I am ſure it was not my intention---I only meant to excuſe myſelf and my ignorance."

" No, no, I am not offended"---replied lady Jemima, in a tone that ſeemed unwillingly to declare it; " but pray do not talk about your *confined* ſituation---you have been more indulged than moſt natural children are; and you have great cauſe to be thankful."

" 'Tis true, madam," anſwered Elizabeth, riſing to depart, " I have abundant cauſe

cauſe to be thankful; but ſtill permit me to recollect that, from ſome one or other, certainly humanity was my due---if I am Mr. Byram's natural daughter---and may nothing ever deprive me of the right to call him father! ſurely he was bound to take care of me---if I am an alien from his family, he muſt have taken the charge of me from ſome one elſe; and then too he was bound to protect me. But he did more for me than I could have any right to claim---he fed me; he protected me; and he inſtructed me; and had he lived, I ſhould have never known what I now ſuffer."

Anger and tender recollection had forced from Elizabeth's ſwelling heart this reply; and guſhing tears bore witneſs to her feelings; but a provocation ſo heinous as plain truth, is not to be forgiven by the tyrants of ſociety. Lady Jemima in a rage, into which her fermenting paſſions were of themſelves ready to kindle, ordered

Elizabeth

Elizabeth to quit her preſence, and threatened, that ſince her ſpirit had ſhewn itſelf ſo violent, ſhe would diſpenſe with Mrs. Haccombe's giving herſelf any farther trouble about her.

Elizabeth had, for about two hours, repented in ſolitude the intemperate ſincerity ſhe had been provoked to---ſhe blamed herſelf for ingratitude towards lady Jemima---ſhe conſidered how Mr. Byram would have thought of her unguarded reply---ſhe felt herſelf wrong; and her conſcience, which early diſcipline and a natural diſpoſition to peace made very ſuſceptible of any deviation from the rule of paſſive ſubmiſſion, reproached her too ſeverely to leave her any reſt while lady Jemima had cauſe to be offended. She was aſhamed to ſee her---ſhe ſat down to write in that ſtyle of culprit meekneſs, which though it might hurt a generous mind, the greedy of power are always willing to admit as a confeſſion of their rights.

She

She was interrupted in the middle of a letter, where tears effaced the characters, by the ſudden entrance of lady Jemima's waiting-woman, who, never a favorite with Elizabeth, now ſeemed a miniſter of vengeance. Importance and haſte were in her countenance; and by her dreſs it appeared, that ſhe had been or was going out. Without any preface, ſhe deſired Miſs Elizabeth to get ready to walk a little way, a requeſt that would not have ſtartled her, as ſhe had ſometimes been permitted to ſee a little of the city on foot with this truſty Abigail; but the time, the haſte, the ſuddenneſs of this invitation, and above all her previous interview with lady Jemima, and its concluſion, made her apprehend it more probable that ſhe was to be puniſhed than indulged.

To avert whatever might be the conſequences of the offence ſhe had given lady Jemima, ſhe begged that ſhe might be allowed to ſee her before ſhe went out.

" You

" You cannot, Miſs; my lady is in a peck of troubles, and very buſy."

" Dear Mrs. Brown, do let me ſee her ladyſhip---if you have any pity, do---I know I have made her angry---it is entirely my fault---do let me beg her pardon."

" I cannot, indeed, Miſs---I tell you my lady is very buſy—I am ſure ſhe would not---that is, ſhe could not ſee you."

" Then I am ſure," anſwered Elizabeth, burſting afreſh into tears, " ſhe muſt be very angry indeed---I confeſs I have deſerved it, but I am certain if ſhe knew how ſincerely I repent what I ſaid, ſhe would forgive me."

" Lawk Miſs! how can you make ſuch a piece of work?---I know nothing about my lady and you; but I am ſure ſhe cannot ſee you."

" Then, dear Mrs. Brown, while I get ready,

ready, only be ſo good as to carry this letter to her. I had not time to finiſh it; but do take it, and beg her to ſay ſhe forgives me."

"Why, dear Miſs," anſwered the woman, as if compaſſionating Elizabeth, and yet unwilling to apply to her lady,---"don't mind ſuch trifles;---if you and my lady have had a tiff, never mind---it will go off again."

"Aye, Mrs. Brown; but I was in the wrong; and I cannot reſt till I have confeſſed myſelf ſo."

"Mercy on us," cried Mrs. Brown, with a ſneering laugh, "why, if I was to own myſelf in the wrong half as often as my lady and I fall out, there would be no living with her. Let me give you one piece of advice, Miſs:---if you would have lady Jemima do what you want at any time, keep her under your thumb."

"Keep

" Keep lady Jemima under my thumb ?" repeated Elizabeth, not underſtanding the vulgar cant---" what is that?"

" Why keep the upper hand yourſelf."

" And how pray am I to keep the upper hand ?"

" By giving her as good as ſhe brings."

" I do not underſtand you."

" Why do as I do."

" How is that ?"

" Why, when my lady chuſes to find fault with me, which perhaps ſhe will take into her head for a week together, I tell her ſhe does not know what ſhe would have, and that ſhe may find ſomebody elſe to mind her whims, for I will be ſlave to nobody's humours."

" Aye,

" Aye, Mrs. Brown," replied Elizabeth, " that may ſuit you, but it would never become me---I am obliged to lady Jemima for every thing I have; and it would he very ungrateful in me to uſe ſuch language---beſide, where ſhould I go, if lady Jemima were to turn me off?"

" Oh, there are places enough I warrant you. But her ladyſhip would not turn you off---She dares not do it."

" O, do not talk ſo! Mrs. Brown, indeed it is very wrong. Lady Jemima may turn me off if ſhe pleaſes---ſhe is under no obligation to take care of me."

" No obligation?---why, are not you her daughter-in-law?"

" I hardly dare call myſelf ſo."

" I don't know what you may call yourſelf; but I fancy one day or other her ladyſhip

ladyſhip will find——She has uſed me very ill I am ſure, with regard to my mourning."

"Find what?" ſaid Elizabeth, whoſe curioſity was more rouſed by the manner in which theſe words were ſpoken, than by the words themſelves.

"Find what? Why find that you are Mr. Byram's daughter."

"I hope I am---but do you know what a ſtrange thing I was told juſt before we came hither?"

At that inſtant, the loud voice of lady Jemima ſummoned her attendant, who forgetting all the injuries ſhe had alluded to, obſequiouſly obeyed the call, and preſently returning with the looks ſhe had firſt entered with, haſtened Elizabeth to get ready for a ſhort walk. She, however, on what authority ſhe did not de-

clare, took on herſelf to aſſure her of lady Jemima's perfect reconciliation to her; and Elizabeth, that ſhe might not again offend by refractorineſs, as ſhe underſtood it to be her ladyſhip's pleaſure that ſhe ſhould go, obeyed.

The two dependents walked together to a houſe but a few ſtreets off, where Mrs. Brown was received as an intimate, and where, after a little previous converſation, ſhe propoſed to leave her charge, while ſhe went a little farther on ſome buſineſs for her lady. This was not at all agreeable to Elizabeth, who was ſincere in her diſlike of new faces, and feared, though why ſhe could not tell, the being left alone there; but ſhe ſoon found ſhe had no alternative; and as the perſons who had received her, were two decent and rather genteel middle-aged women, ſhe endeavoured to appear ſatisfied.

Theſe dames were extremely inquiſitive as to the gueſt they were in poſſeſſion of; but

but Elizabeth's ſorrows were not ſuch as encouraged her to be communicative—ſhe felt reſerved; and they obtained nothing but general anſwers from her.

Some hours elapſed; and Mrs. Brown was not returned. Preparations for dinner appeared, and the young lady was invited to partake of it; but, fixed at the window, in hopes every paſſenger might be her conductreſs, ſhe declined the civil invitation. At laſt, wearied beyond all patience, ſhe propoſed returning to lady Jemima's; but being too little acquainted with the way ſhe had been brought, to be certain ſhe could find it again, ſhe aſked one of the gentlewomen to accompany her. Some difficulty was at firſt made; but her intreaties prevailed, and they were ſetting out when Mrs. Brown returned with a meſſage that indicated her having been home already, for it was an order from her lady that Miſs Elizabeth ſhould remain where ſhe was till ſhe received farther commands.

To her queſtions after lady Jemima's and Miſs Arabella's welfare, ſhe received an anſwer, that they were very well; but that the houſe was in ſuch confuſion in conſequence of the arrival of ſome viſitors, that while they ſtayed, her ladyſhip could not receive Miſs Elizabeth again. Mrs. Brown, however, promiſed to ſpend every minute of her ſpare time with her; and ſhe was forced to ſubmit.

CHAP. X.

THE truly important buſineſs that had made lady Jemima deſirous to have her houſe to herſelf, was an unexpected intimation that Sir Clifford Byram was landed, and would ſoon be with her. She could not flatter herſelf that he would not immediately take up his abode with her, as the houſe was, in fact, his own; and as the laſt piece of furniture ſhe wiſhed him to ſee in it, was her ill-treated daughter-in-law, ſhe was compelled to turn her thoughts from the offence ſhe had recently given her, to the ſecurity of her perſon againſt the very probable chance that ſhe might be reſcued from her power.

To ſee Sir Clifford was, notwithſtanding all her hopes, matter of no joy to Lady Jemima, who could not quite ſuppreſs her fear that ſhe had converted his former un-

juſt partiality to her into ſettled and far more reaſonable diſlike; but relying on her own faſcinations, ſhe did not doubt that the firſt interview over, ſhe ſhould be able to re-eſtabliſh herſelf in his good graces. If he enquired for his eldeſt grand-daughter, ſhe deſigned to tell him ſhe was on a viſit to her uncle, with whom ſhe knew ſhe could eaſily hereafter arrange any little matter of doubt, by refering to the myſtery in which the young lady had been bred up.

Sir Clifford came; and Lady Jemima was not deceived in her idea of an unpleaſant meeting. The old man was grievouſly hurt at the death of his ſon; and knowing how little comfort the object of all his former hopes had derived from his forced marriage, he ſeemed well diſpoſed to hate all it concerned. Lady Jemima could neither ſoothe his affliction nor abate his antipathy by any of her eloquence or blandiſhments; for he brought with him

the

the ſtrongeſt arguments againſt any credit that might have been given to her arts. Theſe were immeaſurable accounts of debts from tradeſmen whom the widow, on the ſtrength of his intimation that he would ſettle his ſon's affairs, had referred to him, in the mean time appropriating to her own uſe whatever ſums of money ſhe could lay her hands on. She was not aware that Sir Clifford was already in poſſeſſion of theſe coſtly manuſcripts; but their former owners had neither the faith, hope, nor charity to truſt her; and with one accord, after a meeting called among themſelves for the purpoſe, had tranſmitted to the only quarter they had reliance on, copies of their long-ſtanding demands.

They might literally be ſtyled vouchers for Lady Jemima's prodigality; and none but herſelf could, without bluſhing, have ſeen extant ſuch records of folly. Nine tenths of their amount were chargeable

able to her, rather than to her husband; and not a vestige remained to justify one fourth of it. Equipages, furniture, dress, were vanished like fairy bounty; and demands of all sorts from both kingdoms seemed to have no more substantial foundation, than in the caprice of the vender or the consumer.

The production of these papers was defered till after dinner; for Sir Clifford's grief was at first too strong for any discussions. Lady Jemima, in the mean time, after the kindest attentions and most sympathetic condolences, offered to his notice her youngest daughter, expecting that she would be considered as the mournful relic of Sir Clifford's hopes, but Miss, who had no other idea of a rich old man than as a cross miser, was not a fit herald on the occasion: she entered pertly, looked saucily, sat a few minutes indignantly, and then departed haughtily on finding her grand-

grandfather too much abſorbed in melancholy to notice even *her* charms.

Lady Jemima watching every turn of his countenance in hope to get ſome advantage, ſat down to table with him; and with the kindeſt urgency, intreated him to eat. He ſeemed ſcarcely conſcious of her preſence---he took only a morſel; and as ſoon as the ſervants were withdrawn, he began to explain a degree of agitation that ſeemed too great for the ſuppoſed cauſe, by the ſevereſt reprehenſions of her ladyſhip's conduct, and by unloading his pockets.

He aſked her how ſhe could juſtify ſo enormous an exceſs of his liberal allowance to his ſon, and how far ſhe thought the fortune ſettled on her for her ſeparate uſe, would go towards diſcharging demands which he proteſted he would never take on himſelf. "As far," ſaid he, "as my ſon appears to have been concerned in theſe expences, I will attend

attend to them; but not one ſhilling will I pay, madam, for your particular nonſenſe---It has almoſt broke my heart to ſee the folly and miſery that your entrance into my family has brought upon it; but it was, I confeſs, my own fooliſh act---Byram would never have married you, but by my command; and I believe, nay I am certain, your conduct, if not your temper, haſtened his end."

So violent an attack, even the ſtudied hypocriſy of Lady Jemima was not prepared againſt: ſhe returned with intereſt railing for railing; and the converſation grew ſo warm, that Sir Clifford, who had too much politeneſs to turn the lady out of his houſe, quitted it with a reſolution to ſee her no more.

The firſt moments after his abrupt departure were given to anger; but the next ſuggeſted to Lady Jemima the neceſſity of cool procedure. She ſaw all her premeditated

ditated acts abortive: she saw herself contemned; and her sagacity taught her that Sir Clifford's affections would probably be wholly alienated from his son's family. On whom was it to be apprehended they would fall?---Doubtless on Elizabeth, should he once hear of her. This evil, all the natural and added passions of her bosom, prompted her to avert. She hated, she feared Elizabeth, and resolved, before she bestowed another thought on the detested old man and his penurious whims, that she would remove her formidable competitor out of his reach.

Aware that a continuance of violent measures might defeat her purpose, she suppressed whatever resentment Elizabeth's unguarded reply to her had excited; and with kind expressions recalled her from her banishment. The ingenuous girl, grateful for her imagined goodness, threw herself into her arms on seeing her; and expressed her contrition for the offence

ſhe had given her. Lady Jemima declared herſelf perfectly ſatisfied, and bidding her ſit down by her, with manifeſt agitation, and the moſt treacherous countenance, began thus to her.

"I was afraid, my deareſt girl, you would conſtrue my ſending Brown out with you into reſentment on my part; but be aſſured I am incapable of ſuch meanneſs; and beſide, the offence you imagined yourſelf to have given me did not warrant it. At the moment of your quitting the room I had a meſſage from Mr. Byram's father, informing me that he was landed, and would call on me almoſt immediately. I cannot ſay I think it was polite not to give me more notice. I wiſhed him not to ſee you, before I could introduce you in the way I wiſhed to his regard. I therefore ſent Brown out with you, not doubting that when I had told Sir Clifford the ſituation you were left in, he would, if it were only out of regard to his ſon, whom he profeſſes

to

to love, do ſomething for you, but I was ſoon taught to think more humbly of my own rhetoric; for *old* men, I believe, whatever change there may be in the *young* ones, are the ſame in all ages and countries; and no man on the other ſide ſixty loves any thing but money. Notwithſtanding the explicit aſſurance he had given me in one of his letters, he now poſitively refuſes to pay one ſhilling of Byram's debts, though we lived in his life-time only on a ſcanty allowance from him, which he knew could not maintain us decently; and when I had given up this point as of leſs importance, and tried to rouſe his humanity by mentioning that his ſon had left an unacknowledged daughter for whom I was much intereſted, utterly deſtitute, I am ſorry to ſay he fell into the moſt brutiſh paſſion, and ordered me to ſay no more about her. Perhaps I was injudicious to preſs the matter farther; but really I could not endure ſuch cruelty; and I urged him by every argument I could

ſuggeſt to conſider you; but it was without effect. He was violent againſt his ſon's indiſcretion, and declared, that ſhould you at any time preſume to diſgrace his family by taking his name, he would find means to prevent every body from affording you protection.---You will therefore, my dearest Elizabeth, think what you had beſt do---I tell you, that you may know how to act---Suppoſe you were yourſelf to go to Sir Clifford---but I think you ſay you do not like ſeeing ſtrangers."

"O no, no, madam," anſwered Elizabeth, overcome by the renewed ſenſe of her own forlorn ſituation, and by lady Jemima's ſeeming goodneſs---"I will never intrude on Sir Clifford---he ſhall not be offended by me---I will ſeek a livelihood where he ſhall never hear of me; and I will endeavour to forget who I am."

"You will do right, my love," replied lady Jemima, tenderly taking her hand; for

for Elizabeth was now at the point all her endeavours were aimed at, namely that of giving up all connection with her family. "I would adviſe you to act independently of every body, and treat thoſe who neglect you with the contempt they deſerve."

"I can never treat my father's father with contempt," anſwered Elizabeth, ſuppreſſing her tears.

"No, my dear; but I would not have you ſubject yourſelf to his ill-nature. The knowledge of who you are can never be of any uſe to you.---It may be of infinite detriment to your ſucceſs in the world:--- people do not like the idea of natural ſons and daughters in a family; ſo I would adviſe you to change your name for ſome one that may not be ſuſpected; and then you may do what you will."

"I have no name, madam, but Elizabeth."

"True,

"True, my dear, baſtards are not allowed any ſurname; but it will be neceſſary you ſhould take one. I ſhall loſe no time, you may be aſſured, in ſending you over to my dear Mrs. Haccombe, who I know will be a parent to you; and this will ſecure you from any thing Sir Clifford may project. I ſhould not wonder, in the humour he is in, if he were to take it into his head, to ſend you to a convent; for I dare ſay the old gentleman is half a papiſt in his heart."

"Were that the worſt," replied Elizabeth in the deep tone of profound miſery, "I would not ſhun him---I ſhould like to be a nun---I dread more his throwing me upon the world amongſt ſtrangers."

"What? Would you change your religion?"

"I do

"I do not know, madam---I ſhould do it for peace, and to ſecure me from doing wrong; and then I think, if I were ſincere, it might be forgiven."

"O dear! by no means, I aſſure you---I hope nobody I have any regard for will ever change their religion."

To be ſure it was a matter of great importance with lady Jemima to be ſtedfaſt in her creed; for it was her only tie to the church ſhe belonged to. Divine worſhip was always at an hour inconvenient for her attendance; daily devotion was nonſenſe in her refined imagination; and as to that irregular, but perhaps ſtill more acceptable incenſe which the heart ſpontaneouſly offers to the protecting deity from the midſt of crowds and the tumult of gaiety, ſhe had no idea of it. The world and her paſſions had engroſſed her; and if ever ſhe *did* make any uſe of the ſuperſtitious language of religion, it

was

was to expreſs her ſurpriſe, her pleaſure or her reſolution, by the various appellations of its object---but lady Jemima Byram would not for the world have hazarded her precious ſoul by renouncing her form of religion, unleſs indeed ſhe could have gained by it any thing to which obſtinacy was an obſtacle.

CHAP. XI.

WEARIED with the commotion of the day, Elizabeth retired early to reſt; and with a deeper ſenſe than ever of her own wretchedneſs, paid her evening offering of looks and tears to the two miniatures of her father and mother. With more than uſual ſtrength of recollection, ſhe called to mind Mr. Byram's words. "*And if ever any doubt of your birth ariſes, look at this*"—— Alas! how was the ivory or the depicted reſemblance to anſwer any query her diſtreſſes might dictate?

She received an early viſit from lady Jemima in the morning: the purport of it was to inform her, that the packet ſailed that afternoon, and that ſhe had the preceding evening arranged every thing with the captain, that could make her paſſage agreeable.

"I muſt

" I muſt then go amongſt ſtrangers,"--- replied Elizabeth, in a tone of mortified reſignation, " Well---it will be beſt for me---I thank you, dear madam, for all your goodneſs---I ſhall be quite ready--- but I hope you will give me a letter to Mrs. Haccombe."

" O yes, certainly. But we were talking, my dear, of your taking ſome ſurname---What ſhall it be?——Shall it be Brown, or Smith, or Taylor, or any of thoſe names?"

" They ſound ſo vulgar, madam---I ſhall be thought to belong to nobody of any conſideration."

" And what does that ſignify?" returned lady Jemima rather ſharply, and not diſpoſed to make any allowance for the juvenile punctilio of a pretty-ſounding name

" I was

" I was thinking, madam, to take the name of *Peregrina Lamorne*."

" Peregrina Lamorne, indeed!---a mighty fine name---pray why do you chuſe it?"

" I think it is deſcriptive of my ſituation; for *Peregrina*, you know, is a wanderer; and *Lamorne* would juſt ſuit me; for I am ſure I ſhall be ſorrowful."

" Well, what you pleaſe---only take care to be ready in time---Brown ſhall go with you to the water ſide."

There may be, and there doubtleſs is, a foreboding ſentiment of melancholy accompanying the expectation of what is unpleaſant to the mind; but how trifling it appears when compared with that with which the reality ſometimes ſtrikes on the mind, however taught to look for it!-----Who that has experienced for months, nay, perhaps, for years, all the charm

charm of life that attends the ſociety of a friend born to ſoothe its anxieties and to adorn its pleaſures, can ſufficiently prepare themſelves, in the longeſt interval, for that moment, when the "*And now farewell*:--*God bleſs you*," are the words that vibrate in the ear in mournful cadence?--- Much indeed of the ſolace of *real* friendſhip Elizabeth had never enjoyed while with lady Jemima, who was by turns benevolent or captious, juſt as ſuited her ſchemes or her humor; but the total of her goodneſs amounted, in the conceptions of her dependent, to a vaſt heap; and her gratitude overcame her diſguſt as often as ſhe oppoſed her ladyſhip's favors to the injuries ſhe ſometimes fancied ſhe had ſuffered in being denied on all hands any ſubſtitute for parental protection.

Now that her fate ſeemed irrevocably decided, ſhe felt herſelf removed to a middle ſtate of being, which placed her at an equal diſtance from all connexion with the world.

world. It was to her idea an ocean affording, not only neither port nor harbour, but deſtitute of all terreſtrial boundary; and her ſpirits ſunk with horror and diſmay at the frightful picture. But the ſhort ſpace of time ſhe was allowed for her laſt preparations was favorable to her. She finiſhed her packing, dreſſed herſelf in her habit; and turning round to behold for the laſt time her apartment and its furniture, ſhe went down to dine with lady Jemima and Miſs Arabella.

She requeſted to know whether her muſical inſtrument and thoſe little elegant accommodations, which had aſſiſted her early attempts in the arts, might not be ſent over to her; but ſhe was told it had been Sir Clifford's expreſs order, that nothing at the houſe in the north ſhould be touched till he had been there himſelf. "But," added lady Jemima, "if you wiſh for ſatisfaction on this point, you could write to him: you will, I dare ſay, prepare your-

ſelf

ſelf properly for the ſort of anſwer he may return you.

" O no--- I ſhould dread writing to Sir Clifford---I will leave it to you, dear madam---perhaps when he has been to my father's---to Mr. Byram's I mean---he may enquire about the inſtrument, and let me have it."

This was a poor dependence---for lady Jemima, preſſed extremely, it muſt be confeſſed, for ready money, had already contracted for the ſale of all Elizabeth's little ſcientific property, to a perſon about to eſtabliſh, or rather to *attempt* a ſchool in the neighbourhood. It was true, ſhe had got but half the value of what ſhe ſold; but the bargain was a bargain, and the money was money.

" Your ladyſhip will do me the honor to write to me, I hope---and Miſs Arabella will, I am ſure, favor me with a letter now and then---And pray give my affectionate

affectionate regards to Miſs Byram, when ſhe returns, and ſay how happy it will make me to hear of her."

" O yes, we will certainly write," replied lady Jemima. " I believe Brown is ready to go with you---pray take care it is not too late. Finiſh your glaſs of wine."

Convulſive tears, no longer to be ſubdued by fear or fortitude, guſhed from Elizabeth's eyes and choked her utterance. Lady Jemima bid her own proud heart reſt for the few remaining moments; and in ſilence waited the ſubſiding of her emotion. Miſs Arabella, whom nature had never taught to feel or underſtand diſtreſs, leaning her elbow on the table, and ſetting her nails againſt her teeth, with a broad ſtare at her relation, aſked her "what ſhe cried for." Elizabeth rouſed her recollection, and drying her ſtill overflowing eyes, roſe and taking lady Jemima's

not

not-extended hand, begged to know "when ſhe might hope to ſee her again---whether in months or years."

"O, that depends entirely upon yourſelf and your ſituation," ſhe anſwered, "I can give you no ſatisfaction on that head, till I know how you are ſettled."

"May I, in any difficulty, preſume to requeſt your advice?"

"You will hardly need it. Be guided wholly by Mrs. Haccombe; and be ſatisfied that I could never approve what ſhe does not---follow her implicitly---ſhe is a woman of great underſtanding, and has your good very much at heart. As I mentioned you to her only as a young perſon I was much attached to, ſhe is not aware of your unfortunate ſituation---you will do well therefore to be cautious of revealing it, eſpecially while Sir Clifford is

is thus vehement againſt you---any imprudence of this kind might not only ruin yourſelf but all of us; for he will ſuppoſe I have purpoſely affronted him. Promiſe me, therefore, that I may know how to act for your good, that you will keep *your origin, your family, and every thing reſpecting your connexions here*, a ſecret."

" I certainly will, madam. But pray ſhall not I want a little money?---how can I get it?"

" Why yes, you will want a little; but captain S. is paid for your paſſage, and will accompany you to London---he is going there on buſineſs, and Mrs. Haccombe will be there to receive you---here are five guineas for you---you will not need more. And here is my letter to Mrs. Haccombe---give my kindeſt love to her, and tell her I am in ſo unſettled a ſtate at preſent, I can decide on nothing,

but I hope it will not be long before I am in England."

This hint cheered a little the drooping girl, but it was followed with a look from the ſpeaker, that ſeemed to exclude her hearer from all intereſt in her movements: Elizabeth did not, however, attend to it ---ſhe extended her hand to Miſs Arabella, who replied with a cold---"good bye."

The coach was ready,---Brown attended,---her little hand-packages were given in; and not having once taken her handkerchief from her eyes, ſhe found herſelf at the water's edge.

The unpleaſant novelty of the ſcene ſcattered her ideas; and in ſome meaſure abſorbed her ſorrow.——The hurry of aquatic commerce ſhe was unacquainted with---the noiſe alarmed her---the huge bulk of the veſſels near her aſtoniſhed her,

her, till ſhe almoſt ceaſed to breathe---the element in view appalled her; and when ſhe found herſelf on board the pacquet, ſhe was ſcarcely conſcious how ſhe got there. Mrs. Brown had parted from her with ſome ſymptoms of regret; and ſhe ſailed for England in ſearch of that protection ſhe could expect from ſtrangers alone.

CHAP. XII.

Lady Jemima now felt her mind at eaſe from a weight that had oppreſſed her almoſt beyond the patience of her hypocriſy; and ſhe had leiſure to turn her thoughts in all their vigor towards the untractable Sir Clifford. Before ſhe retired to reſt, ſhe had, in her own fertile imagination, projected a new plan of attack on his weak ſide, which ſhe did not doubt would ſucceed infallibly. This was a candid confeſſion of her diſſipation and extravagance, which ſhe could prevail on him to conſider as *paſt* errors, no more to be repeated or apprehended, now that rolling years and the ſorrows of life had matured her judgment: ſhe meant to inſinuate, that her ſteady perſeverance in an amended courſe would depend on his encouragement, that ſhe requeſted only to

to be allowed to ſpend her days under his protection, and that by her conſtant attention to his future comforts, it ſhould be her ſtudy to atone for all her former indiſcretions.

This plan might have ſucceeded had time been allowed for its operation; but Sir Clifford, more and more diſguſted by the increaſing proofs of his ſon's want of prudence and her ladyſhip's want of principle, had likewiſe, before the hour of reſt, digeſted in his mind the plan *he* meant to abide by; which was no other than a total dereliction of Lambert's wife and children. This determination he expreſſed early the next morning by a friend, who found Lady Jemima in the act of compoſing her recantation. He informed her that it was Sir Clifford's pleaſure that ſhe ſhould within a fortnight quit that houſe, and give up whatever Byram had held by his favor.

No

No gentle terms were ſought to ſoften this harſh meſſage: the perſon who officiated for Sir Clifford, appeared vehement in his intereſts; and the firmneſs with which he executed his miſſion declared his approbation of it. Lady Jemima, thrown entirely off her guard by the ſuddenneſs of the blow, exclaimed; "Good God! then I have nothing!---Does Sir Clifford mean to reduce me and my children to want?---Are we to ſweep the ſtreet, or to beg, for a livelihood?---What, does the covetous old fellow wiſh to have his grandchildren curſe him?---They will, they ſhall curſe him; and I will teach them to do it.---An old miſer! this was the ſcheme of his ſeeming bounty to his ſon, to indulge his extravagance while he lived, and to ruin his children after his death.---Tell Sir Clifford, Sir, from me, that I will ſtick at nothing to be revenged.---I will not ſtarve to pleaſe him ---I can have money where and when I will; and as for his grand-daughters, they

ſhall

ſhall not work indeed to diſgrace him; but they ſhall walk the ſtreets and boaſt themſelves Byrams."

"Have patience, good Lady," replied the ambaſſador: "Sir Clifford is not likely to be daunted by your threats, but he may be rendered inexorable by your fury.---He is hurt; and his fortune will feel Mr. Byram's and your boundleſs profuſion; and ſurely for ſuch depredations on his bounty, it is no *adequate* puniſhment to leave you to live on the ſeparate income you ſecured to yourſelf on your marriage, which I know to be enough to maintain you and your daughters in decency. It is more than four hundred pounds a year."

"And pray, Sir, what are four hundred pounds a year to maintain a woman of rank like me? Do you know, Sir, who I am?"

"Per-

"Perfectly well, Madam; you were the daughter of Lord Armathwaite, left by him without a shilling, and fortuned by the liberality of your brother: you have lived in such profusion, that *competency* is poverty in your estimation.---The waste of any one of your houses would have fed the poor around you.---At your house in the north, Sir Clifford is well informed that whole quarters of meat were weekly buried to prevent the contagion of their putrefaction.---Here you have had a set of thieves for servants, because your temper and your negligence drove all others away from you.---At your temporary ready-furnished abodes in London, your entertainments have exceeded all in extravagance.---At Bath, at Tunbridge, at almost every place of dissipation in both kingdoms, your family is remembered as the most easily gulled of any of those who come thither with full pockets and empty heads———therefore think not, Madam, I am to be awed by your rank

or

or your tongue.---Sir Clifford is my friend ---He is wounded to the ſoul at the diſcovery of your worthleſſneſs, but if I can prevent it, he ſhall not be duped by it."

With theſe words the ſtranger was quitting the room; but Lady Jemima, choaking with paſſion at finding herſelf conquered where ſhe was uniformly ſucceſsful ---in a war of *words*---was yet not ſo blinded by paſſion as to cruſh all her hopes for want of a little art. In a voice ſcarcely audible, ſhe begged to be heard:---the ſtranger returned, and burſting into tears ſhe ſaid:

"Forgive, Sir, my impatience: I am almoſt mad with diſtreſs.—Tell Sir Clifford I am at his mercy---I and my girls--- for to my ſhame I confeſs it---I have nothing."

"Nothing? Madam!"

" No, nothing."

" What is become of the money ſettled on you at your marriage?"

" It is gone--I prevailed on my truſtees."

" Gone?---How?"

" I know not how.---I have ſpent it."

" Impoſſible!---Why it was more than ten thouſand pounds!"

" 'Tis true---but had it been twenty I ſhould have ſpent it."

" And would you have me tell this to Sir Clifford!"

" Yes; and beg him to ſave us from ruin."

" Cer-

"Certainly, Madam.---But do you think Sir Clifford will not be exaſperated ſtill farther?"

"I know not---but I cannot---I will not ſtarve---tell him ſo."

Her paſſion was returning---the ſtranger perceived it, and promiſing to uſe his intereſt with Sir Clifford, and deſiring her to wait patiently till ſhe heard from him, he left her.

Lady Jemima's conſtitution was not quite ſo tough as her conſcience. The agitation of her ſpirits, and the waking cares ſhe had experienced in ripening her many plots, had whirled her brains into a fever; and this laſt effort made it break out with a degree of violence which, though it did not immediately threaten her life, deprived her of all her uſual energies. She took care that Sir Clifford ſhould be informed of her illneſs; but he,

con-

conſidering it as the ſtale artifice of her well-known cunning, paid no attention to it; and when ſhe was well enough to think again of *buſineſs*, ſhe had the mortification of hearing that he had ſailed for England. He had left for her a brief letter, or rather a kind of epiſtolary ejectment, in which, without taking the ſmalleſt notice of the repreſentations ſhe hoped had been made to him, he informed her that his ſteward would be ready in fourteen days to take poſſeſſion in his name, of all that his ſon had held by the tenure of his permiſſion.

Lady Jemima was thunderſtruck; and indeed ſhe might be aſtoniſhed; for ſhe knew Sir Clifford well enough to be convinced, that inhumanity was no feature of his character: ſhe had perſuaded herſelf, that whenever ſhe choſe to ſubmit, he would accept her ſubmiſſion; and in her caſe, whatever might have been her errors, that a regard to decency would certainly

tainly have procured from him at leaſt a limited attention. All theſe conſiderations ſhould have induced Lady Jemima, and would have excited any other perſon to ſeek an explanation of ſuch ſeeming inconſiſtency, by the gentle means of cool argument; but accuſtomed to put the worſt conſtruction on the actions of every one, her ſagacity and miſanthrophy deceived her, and led her into a moſt fatal error. In a paroxiſm of rage, ſhe ſat down, and wrote to Sir Clifford in a ſtyle of ſuch invective, as would have rendered the production of her letter her greateſt puniſhment and his beſt revenge. In it ſhe anticipated his repentance of his ſeverity, in theſe words:

" Your flinty heart will perhaps relax in ſome moment of capricious tenderneſs ---ſuch tenderneſs as I long ago have perceived, laughed at, and deſpiſed, when faſcinated by my perſuaſions, and intoxicated by the flattery your own folly encouraged,

couraged, I have brought your ſtubborn ſpirit to my every purpoſe. You will now, perhaps, left only to the waywardneſs of your own humor, in ſome gloomy hang-dog November day, fancy you have been cruel to me and my children; and ſhould the ſymptoms of your gout attack you, you will look on it as a judgment of Heaven. And for fear Satan ſhould whet his claws for you, you will make a cowardly codicil to your will which will revoke all its purpoſes, and intreat me to appeaſe your manes by accepting your hoards.---Be aſſured, venerable Sir, however ſoon (and the ſooner the better) that event may happen, which ſhall give efficacy to your laſt will and teſtament, it will find me alike out of the reach of your deſpicable love or hatred. A head endued like mine, will not long reſt till it has obtained its purpoſe. It is policy of ſuch as fear the wife to keep them free from diſcontents."

CHAP. XIII.

To have admitted a ſentiment of pity after reading ſo daring a defiance, would have been to give currency to the libel; but Sir Clifford was not at all diſpoſed at preſent to relax into any of that tenderneſs which her ladyſhip had prognoſticated.—His anger had, it is true, been kept alive by means no more juſtifiable than Lady Jemima's errors; for the perſon he had deputed to attend her had an intereſt in her ill ſucceſs. His name was Laſſiter: he was an attorney, and living near Sir Clifford in Northamptonſhire, had ſome years before ſo far ingratiated himſelf into his good opinion, as to get the ſtewardſhip of his eſtates and the management of all his affairs in England: he had riſen from the capacity of footman in the family of a practitioner of the law in London,—had married the cook, and having talents

that

that rendered the ſtage or the deſk equally eligible, he choſe the latter, and his maſter dying, prevailed on his ſucceſſor, an idle young man, to article him for the time requiſite to his ſetting up for himſelf:———he had encouraged his new patron in all his vicious propenſities, and having ſeen him reduced in due time to the want of a ſum of money, not greater than his ſavings gave him the power of commanding, he had adviſed him to relinquiſh the toils of buſineſs for an inadequate conſideration:---the bait took, and Mr. Laſſiter became, by virtue of his profeſſion, a gentleman; but his practice growing at length a little too bold, and ſome intimation having been given by the higher powers that he was marked for annihilation, he had avoided the ſtorm by ſhifting his quarters; and relying on the connexions of his birth-place, and his ſkill at forwarding his own intereſts, had ſettled in the town of A——— in Northamptonſhire.

Here

Here he ſoon fixed his eyes on Sir Clifford as good game for his prowling avidity, and carrying a ſpecious outſide and a tongue well calculated to recommend himſelf, he ſoon obtained an inſight into his patron's domeſtic ſituation---ſoon learnt his uneaſineſſes and their ſources.

He had long looked with a jealous eye on Byram and his father's doting attachment on him---he had wiſely conſidered that this one impediment ſtood in the way of Sir Clifford's making an optional bequeſt of his property; and conſidering himſelf as an object as fit as any other to be his heir, if he had but ſcience enough to juſtle out all other pretenders, he had boldly projected and entered on a plan of diſinheritance; but he had juſt found Sir Clifford's partiality too ſtrong for his endeavors, and, to ſave his credit, had juſt given up that part of his ſcheme, when the friendly hand of death removed this formidable rival.

Sir

Sir Clifford had been ſo far duped by this deſigning knave as to admit him into his confidence: he had told him how Byram's imprudence diſtreſſed him; but this in his extreme indulgence and his wiſh to atone to him for his compulſatory match, the natural goodneſs of his temper diſpoſed him to overlook.---It was not ſo with the follies of Lady Jemima: he thought it a ſerious thing for a wife and a mother to be perpetually expoſing her reputation to ſcandal and her honor to danger by that ſort of levity which courted impertinent freedom:---he could find out no virtue in her---he could not love her; but he would never have hated her, had not Laſſiter, who affected feelings ſuperior to his own, from time to time delicately whiſpered the reports he heard from Ireland, or whatever other places Lady Jemima reſided in. From Dublin, by dint of a good correſpondence, he was furniſhed with a minute detail of all her levities and eccentricities; for Mrs. Brown, her ladyſhip's

ladyſhip's waiting-woman, was his wife's ſiſter, placed there on purpoſe; and whenever her lady viſited England, he made it his buſineſs to croſs her path, that he might on his own knowledge bewail her deplorable miſconduct for the winter evenings' amuſement of Sir Clifford.

His ſiſter-in-law had not failed to furniſh him with the legend of Elizabeth; and formerly, in hopes of ruining Byram in his eſteem, he had broached the ſubject of this *illegitimate* daughter; but here he met with a rebuff; for Sir Clifford declared himſelf not at all inclined to believe the ſtory of this daughter, nor diſpoſed to make any enquiry.

But now that Byram was dead, and Lady Jemima by her neglect had ſhewn her contempt of him, it was greatly to be feared that his kindneſs might center in this unacknowledged grand-daughter:--- it was therefore Laſſiter's policy at any rate

rate to clear the fame of Mr. Byram by declaring, from much better authority than any he had yet had, the falfhood of the afperfions thrown on his moral character: he told Sir Clifford when he accompanied him to Ireland, that the information he had hitherto received, he believed to have originated with perfons who promifed themfelves fome advantage in fetting up a claimant on his charity; but that by thofe who had lived in the family for many years, he was affured that Mr. Byram had no natural daughter, and that the young perfon fuppofed to be fo was a ward, whom at the time of his death he was fitting for making her fortune in the Eaft Indies.---With this hint his fifter-in-law had furnifhed him; and thus they both forwarded lady Jemima's views without her underftanding the motive; for Mr. Laffiter and Mrs. Brown were equally hoftile to lady Jemima and her rival.

During Sir Clifford's fhort ftay in Dublin, Laffiter had raked together every particular

ticular of Merion-ſquare follies to complete his diſguſt towards lady Jemima and extend it towards her children, and he had ſucceeded to his wiſh.---He had gladly undertaken the embaſſy to lady Jemima, becauſe he knew it was in his power to ſet the parties at implacable enmity:--- he had reported all her ladyſhip's inſulting language---he had even told of her extravagant annihilation of the fund ſuppoſed ſufficient for her maintenance, but he had deſcribed her as rejecting every offer Sir Clifford could make, and as preferring the moſt iniquitous celebrity to any favor from him; and her letter had, unhappily for herſelf, and fortunately for Laſſiter, confirmed his aggravated report.

Having accompliſhed another great end, that of obtaining the ſtewardſhip of all the Iriſh eſtates, in addition to that of the leſs property in England, he perſuaded Sir Clifford to return into Northamptonſhire, that he might there be rocked to

ſleep

ſleep without fear of any one's breaking his ſlumber: to his wife he committed this care---himſelf ſtaid to witneſs the downfall of lady Jemima.

She bore the diſappointment of her hopes from Sir Clifford with the patience of an enraged lioneſs, though her *cubs* were, it muſt be confeſſed, not her principal care. So far were maternal affections from ſoftening her rage, that her character of a mother only tended to exaſperate her by interfering with her ſelfiſhneſs. She truſted ſhe had effectually got rid of Miſs Byram, whom ſhe did not doubt lord and lady Armathwaite would, for their own ſakes, as ſhe would have done to rid herſelf of trouble, marry off as ſoon as poſſible; but Miſs Arabella, a great awkward forward girl of fourteen, was to be diſpoſed of, and how to detach herſelf from this impediment to the ſtyle ſhe meant to aſſume, was a point not eaſily adjuſted by one who had not five hundred

dred pounds at her command.——The young lady had not even the promiſe of thoſe qualities that might ſupply the deficiency of fortune in procuring her a huſband; and even had matrimony been the goal, her ladyſhip was neither able nor willing to furniſh the expences of the race. To apply to lord Armathwaite for aid, was a ſtep ſhe was very averſe to, for the leſs intercourſe we maintain with thoſe we deceive, the more wiſe we ſhew ourſelves. The want of plan compelled her for the preſent to reſt. She employed the few remaining days which ſhe was allowed to paſs in Merion-ſquare in vilifying Sir Clifford,—and in artfully encouraging to an avowal of a *dangling paſſion* a nobleman whom ſhe had enrolled in the liſt of her admirers.

While Byram was alive, the intercourſe between theſe two perſonages had been only noticed as flirtation. His Lordſhip was high in the ſcale of gallantry, and was admitted

admitted into moſt families with that caution with which a maſtiff is exhibited in a parlour. Her ladyſhip was more flattered by his attentions than by thoſe of all her other lovers, becauſe to be the object of *his* notice excited a more general envy amongſt her own ſex; but as ſhe valued her conqueſt, ſhe was prudent in her management of it, and knowing in how large a range he loved, ſhe thought it her policy to hold him by the tie of expectation.

This nobleman, now about forty years of age, and therefore a ſuitable match for Lady Jemima, was no other than Lord Surcheſter, who about eighteen years before, had profeſſed a paſſion for Joanna Doveridge: he had purſued with ſteadineſs the path of pleaſure his youthful inclination had marked out for him, and was, now at the middle period of life, excepting ſome improvements in profligacy, juſt what he had been when the world's attraction and

his inexperience might have been pleaded in his behalf. He had a good perſon, an addreſs that left no queſtion of his ſuperiority, and a mode of making love, that while it taught the object to conceive herſelf favored, told her alſo it was equally fruitleſs and dangerous to repel him.

Lady Jemima alone had the true art of governing this irreſiſtible lover, who conquered by prepoſſeſſion; and having for more than a year beheld him her captive, ſhe had no doubt but a little more dexterity would rivet his fetters. Love was not in her nature; but it was now become convenient, if not neceſſary, that ſhe ſhould prevail on him to marry her; and to infuſe into his head an idea of matrimony, which was to him a never-failing theme of ridicule, required the abilities of Lady Jemima Byram.

Full of this grand project, which ſhe wiſhed to ſee the event of ere ſhe had

recourſe to her brother, ſhe arranged the few matters neceſſary to her quitting her abode; and feeling too heavily the degradation ſhe was compelled to, to endure the mock condolences Laſſiter's diſpoſition to publiſh it drew from thoſe who did not entirely ſhun her, ſhe reſolved on immediately betaking herſelf to England, but not to London, where her ſcanty purſe and the certainty of meeting her *dear friend* Mrs. Haccombe and her *beloved* ſtep-daughter Elizabeth, might prove inconvenient. She therefore fixed on Bath as her theatre, and, to her joy, found her lover well diſpoſed to purſue her. Not being able to do better, ſhe ſent Miſs Arabella *per force* to a mean, but cheap boarding ſchool in Dublin; and taking with her only her own waiting woman and a favorite footman, ſhe embarked for Parkgate, Lord Surcheſter gallantly officiating as her eſcort.

CHAP. XIV.

As forwardeſt on the road, let us accompany poor Elizabeth, who now literally *ſeeking her fortune* as Peregrina Lamorne, experienced from the kindneſs of Captain S. every alleviation her unpleaſant journey admitted of. A genteel young woman was coming at the ſame time from Holyhead; and her deſtination being to within twenty miles of London, it was agreed that they ſhould travel together poſt. Peregrina therefore eſcaped all the diſtreſſes of a ſtage coach and *ſtrangers*; and ſhe reached London in tolerable ſpirits.

Entering at Iſlington in an unuſually bright February day, ſhe was caught by the buſy gaiety of the ſtreets in her way to Devonſhire place, where her letter of recommendation taught her, her new pa-

troneſs was to be found; but what was her ſurpriſe, when ſhe heard that the family were gone to Bath, and their return was uncertain! There ſeemed however ſome ground for conjecturing that Mrs. Haccombe might be at home the next day; but of Peregrina's coming, nobody ſeemed to have had warning. Captain S. almoſt as much at a loſs as his charge, aſked her if ſhe would remain at an inn till the next day. Her diſtreſs was more than ſhe could bear; and ſhe burſt into tears.

The maid-ſervant who had opened the door, ſeemed not ſolely deſtitute of compaſſion: ſhe offered to fetch the houſekeeper; and the kindneſs being accepted, in hopes of farther information, a lady, full of importance, abundantly large, and ſupremely fine, made her appearance. To Captain S's enquiries ſhe anſwered, "Why Sir, our people is all gone down to Bath, and I expected as they would have been up again this week; but one of our men

was

was in town yeſterday, and ſaid my maſter talked of ſtaying longer; but he thought as my miſtreſs would not be for ſtaying; ſo I think it very *likable*, ſhe will be up to-morrow or a day or two; and as the young lady has a letter, and I know my miſtreſs ſaid *ſomefat* ſome time ago about *ſpecting* a young lady from Ireland; why if the young lady will walk in, I will do all I can to make it agreeable; for I have all the management of our houſe the ſame as my miſtreſs."---With this encouragement, Captain S. adviſed Miſs Lamorne to remain at Mrs. Haccombe's---he promiſed to ſee her daily, and left her in tears.

A fortnight however paſſed in daily expectation, notwithſtanding the houſekeeper had written to appriſe her miſtreſs of Miſs Lamorne's arrival, and to requeſt her orders; but Mrs. Haccombe was too deeply engaged, to attend to any one but herſelf. A titled family, her darling deities,

ties, had diſtinguiſhed her by certain condeſcenſions in accepting of ſome of her luxuries which their own narrow income would not allow them:---ſhe had flattered them: they had cajoled her; and though they laughed at her in ſecret, and, ſtiffly attached to the right of pedigree, reſolved not to know her in London, they convinced her of their friendſhip; and ſhe was happy in being of uſe to them.

Their day was at laſt fixed for departing; and not at all to their ſatisfaction, Mrs. Haccombe politely named the ſame day for her journey, hoping that as their route was to London, ſhe ſhould not loſe ſight of them. To get rid of her, they pretended buſineſs which would draw them out of the great road; and Mrs. Haccombe, who in their manner felt herſelf ſlighted and affronted, muſt have travelled diſconſolate and mortified, had not her ſpirits been raiſed, on the laſt morning of her intended ſtay, by hearing of the arrival of lady

lady Jemima Byram. She immediately fought her out, in hopes of ſhewing her quondam friends how eaſily ſhe could repair their loſs. With her ſhe found, at a late breakfaſt, lord Surcheſter; and now her heart was doubly gratified by exhibiting her intimacy with a right honourable lady, and by trying her powers of faſcination on an earl. The joy of meeting her *dear* lady Jemima was a ſufficient pretext for again delaying her journey; and the ſucceſs of a few evenings determined her not to quit Bath till ſhe had ſhaken her friend's empire in his lordſhip's heart.

Lady Jemima was not blind to her danger, nor was it poſſible for the rival ladies to conceal from each other what was paſſing in the mind of each. His lordſhip, ever fond of novelty, appeared not indifferent to the majeſtic perſon, the dark eyes, the unpowdered ringlets, and the morocco cheeks of Mrs Haccombe; and lady Jemima, in her extreme wiſdom, found

found it impolitic to purſue her former plan of *expectation*. She exerted all her arts to rouſe his dozing paſſion; he referred her to her own ſeverity for his apology if he had appeared negligent: ſhe ſtickled only for a promiſe of marriage; he unheſitatingly complied; and fame ſoon made free with the characters of the earl and the widow.

Gratitude without hope could not bind lord Surcheſter: his paſſion had begun to totter; and it ſoon took its *penchant* decidedly towards the alluring oriental charmer. The ladies came to an explanation: they quarrelled irremediably--their tongues could ſcarcely expreſs their rage---but what were lady Jemima's feelings when Mrs. Haccombe left Bath, followed by the peer!

Mr. Haccombe had been abſent from his wife during a part of her ſtay, which he had ſpent with a friend in Wiltſhire.

On

On his return he heard a buz of ſcandal; but matters were then ſo much in favor of Mrs. Haccombe, that it was not difficult to throw the whole blame on lady Jemima. She convinced him that ſhe had been groſsly inſulted by a woman of no character; and in a pet recogniſing a duty in her cooler moments ſhe ſeemed to have forgotten, ſhe declared nothing ſhould prevail on her to beſtow a thought on the miſs that was promiſed her, and whom ſhe endeavoured to ſtigmatiſe as the diſowned offspring of her ladyſhip.

Lord Surcheſter was a man not eaſily awed by conjugal authority, or diſappointed by jealouſy; but in the muſhroom acquaintance he had formed with Mr. Haccombe, he diſcovered that if ever caution was neceſſary in his amours, here it was indiſpenſable; for Haccombe was one of thoſe men who are fools in every thing but the promotion of their perſonal intereſts; and there the hawk is not

quicker ſighted. His paſſion was aggrandiſement and its conſequent power. To gain his wealth he had loſt no opportunity the caſt afforded: through oppreſſion, fraud, peculation, and even murder, had he waded to be rich: ſome of his ſchemes had ſucceeded; many had failed; but at laſt he had returned home rich and wretched: to be alone was his greateſt puniſhment: the approach of night ever dejected him, and was he at any time accidentally in the dark, he ſeemed to have the terrors of a child brought up in a nurſery of hobgoblin legend. Finding bawling and ſedition well paid for, he had bought a borough, and commenced democrat, and was now agape for a contract and a peerage; but as his wife was one of the many machines he had made uſe of for riſing from his original nothingneſs, it would not have ſuited his plans had ſhe rendered herſelf inadmiſſable into polite circles: he therefore ſedulouſly watched her flirting, and fancied, happy man! that

his

his vigilance had been always ſucceſsful. He had no objection to her being admired; on the contrary, he felt proud, when ſome of thoſe reptiles who courted his beams affected to envy him the poſſeſſion of ſo *divine* a woman; and when Mrs. Haccombe's routs and Mrs. Haccombe's maſquerade, her elegant decorations, and her Attic ſuppers were lauded by the public prints, he felt the dilation of pleaſure, and threw her the other handful of money to buy popularity.

Let it not be ſuppoſed however, that Mr. Haccombe, jealous as he was of a Lucretian character for his Lucretia, entertained thoſe rigid obſolete ſuperſtitions which awe the lower world. The mind that contemns authority generally contemns it in all its modifications; and whatever may be the ſpecious ſophiſtry of the preſent day, it is moſt frequently found that he who is a rebel to his lawful governor, is ſo to a far ſuperior power. Mr. Haccombe

Haccombe had been, in the early part of his life, a chriſtian; but chriſtianity is an increaſe of luggage few bring back from the Indies: he had therefore ſuffered his religion to take a quiet nap; and when returned to his native land, he found it ſo old faſhioned, that he totally diſmiſſed it from his uſe. The character of wit, which he never could obtain, was now he ſaw cheaply to be purchaſed by ſeaſonable profaneneſs---a ſcripture quotation would excite a general laugh, and confute where he could not reaſon; and to contend againſt revelation he found was the eaſieſt argument, becauſe the chat, the writings, the declamation of every day helped his genius.

Neither by nature nor habit virtuous, he knew no motive to decency of conduct but his worldly intereſt; but ſtill, as the conſtitution of government did not yet openly patroniſe depravity of manners, he thought the leaſt evil was to be appre-

hended

hended from ſeeming morality: his vices conſequently were private; but they were neither few nor venial; nor were they unſuſpected by his lady, who winked very conveniently, as often as ſhe made any diſcovery, and not unfrequently made uſe of it as a hidden prop to her authority over him.

CHAP. XV.

To ſuch perſons was the important conduct of a creature, young, beautiful, helpleſs, friendleſs, and inexperienced, intruſted by one who hated her for her merits, and dreaded her innocence, and who, had the ſanguinary faſhions of paſt centuries ſtill exiſted, would perhaps, not have ſcrupled to remove her by any ſecret means.

Mrs. Haccombe reached town with diſpoſitions not at all favorable to her new gueſt; but rather leſs apparently unkind. In her tete-à-tete with her huſband during the journey, ſhe had diſcovered, that nothing but a tub thrown to the whale would ſecure her in her machinations againſt him; and it having occured to her that if Miſs Lamorne poſſeſſed any charms of perſon, ſhe might be uſeful to her, her

aſperity

aſperity towards her was ſomewhat ſoftened.

While Captain S. remained in town, Peregrina was far from comfortleſs. She was treated by Mrs. Haccombe's vice-queen, with all that ſtudious reſpect which could redound to her own credit; and Captain S. devoted ſome hours, when he could, in ſhewing her the common curioſities of the metropolis. She found inexhauſtible entertainment in the new world ſhe was introduced to, and feeling herſelf repaid for all her difficulties and diſtreſſes, by the apparent grandeur of thoſe ſhe was placed with, and by the fine ſhops and the ſhewy paſſengers that filled the ſtreets, ſhe endeavoured to forget the paſt, and to be ſatisfied with a ſituation that allowed her to ſee the world, even if ſhe ſtooped to gaze on it.

But, in five days, Captain S. was forced to leave London, and ſhe had then no other

other reſource but what the houſe and its windows afforded her. She had acceſs to a ſplendid piano forte, and to a faſhionable collection of books, ſome of which were *not* of wood; and between theſe and the coaches and the phaëtons, that from two till five wheeled about the ſtreet, ſhe paſſed her time, not chuſing to attempt any public amuſement till Mrs. Haccombe ſhould come to town.

At length, when leaſt expected, ſhe *did* come, about an hour and half before midnight, and when Peregrina was preparing to go to bed. Being appriſed of this welcome yet dreaded arrival, ſhe put herſelf again in order, and went down to the dining parlour, where ſhe found Mr. Haccombe buſied in opening letters, and his lady ſtretched upon a ſopha with her head towards the door. At Peregrina's requeſt, the houſekeeper announced her; Mr. Haccombe raiſed his tawny eyes and bilious countenance at the mention of her name—

name---he bowed civilly and echoed her name to awaken the attention of Mrs. Haccombe, who had drowned every exterior ſound in a deep yawn---ſhe was at the trouble of turning her head; and ſaying only, " Well child, I ſuppoſed you would be here, but I could not come ſooner; I am too much tired to ſpeak to you to night, let me ſee you at breakfaſt to-morrow," ſhe diſmiſſed her to her repoſe.

At breakfaſt, therefore, Miſs Lamorne waited on her patroneſs, who, in the ſtyle of deſpotic requeſt ſhe had learnt in the eaſt, ſignified her pleaſure that ſhe ſhould make the tea.

What Peregrina had conceived of the family magnificence from the ſight of the houſe, with which the houſekeeper had treated her, accorded well with the perſonal ſpecimen Mrs. Haccombe gave her. She had riſen at a late hour and had languiſhed from her chamber to an adjoining breakfaſt-

breakfaſt-room, where ſtood a table glittering with ſilver and gilded china. She herſelf was a bale of the fineſt muſlin worked with the moſt aſtoniſhing beauty, and trimmed in all the profuſion of uncounted wealth, with the moſt coſtly lace. Peregrina met with a reception far from encouraging to her timidity; for the firſt evolution was the application to her eye, of a glaſs ſet round with diamonds, with which ſhe ſcrutinized her dependent's modeſt figure. She then bid her come forward, and ſtill inſpecting, ſhe told her that ſhe had met with lady Jemima at Bath, that ſhe believed her to be an exceeding bad woman, and that ſhe was not certain it would be conſiſtent with her own character, to have any thing to do with a perſon recommended by her.——Peregrina aſtoniſhed, expreſſed her ſurpriſe and ſorrow in inoffenſive terms, which Mrs. Haccombe interrupted, by bluntly telling her, that ſhe was not quite determined what ſhe ſhould do with her, that it depended in a great

great meaſure on her good conduct, whether ſhe ſhould uſe her intereſt to *get her out to India*, or ſend her back to lady Jemima.

Peregrina was in the act of obeying Mrs. Haccombe's orders to prepare the breakfaſt, and had the ſilver caddy in her hand, when, aſtoniſhed at the deception that had been uſed to entrap her, her fingers loſt their retentive powers, and ſhe let the caddy fall on the ſplendid cups and ſaucers, to the damage of the three that were placed on the board. She ſunk into the chair behind her, in a ſtate almoſt of ſtupefaction, while Mrs. Haccombe, whom the clatter had irritated and the loſs provoked, raved with all the fury of a *naiad*, and heſitating at no words, though ever ſo uncouth from female lips, vented her rage as long as her powers laſted. She rang the bell, forgetful of her habitual languor, and exhibiting to the livery ſervants, the miſchief that careleſs creature had done to her

her cypher china, which ſhe prized above all her other ſets, ſhe ordered her from her preſence; but Peregrina had anticipated her commands, and ſtaggering with agitation and faintneſs, had gained the ſtairs, where burſting into a flood of tears, ſhe ſeated herſelf.

From an adjoining room Mr. Haccombe, unconſcious of what was paſſing, iſſued. He too kenned his new gueſt with his optic aſſiſtant, and ſurpriſed at her ſituation, would have accoſted her; but too much diſtreſſed to return civilities ſhe only curtſied, and aſcending the ſtairs gained her own room, which ſhe paced all the remainder of the morning, too deeply hurt to feel fatigue, without hearing any thing of the family below.

She was greatly diſtreſſed at the miſchief ſhe had inadvertently occaſioned; but the greater injury offered to herſelf, abſorbed in a conſiderable degree that regret. She

ſaw

ſaw herſelf the dupe of lady Jemima, whom ſhe could no longer conſider as her friend: ſhe knew not the perſons with whom ſhe was placed; but from Mrs. Haccombe's being employed to deceive her, and from the vehement language ſhe had in her anger, made uſe of, no very favourable ſurmiſes were to be drawn. Whither, ſhould ſhe find it neceſſary to remove, was ſhe to betake herſelf? To truſt lady Jemima was impoſſible: ſhe ſaw too plainly, that her only aim was to get rid of her; and now every ſmothered ſuſpicion of her hoſtile diſpoſition acquiring new force, ſhe ſaw that her whole conduct to her had been cruel. Was it poſſible to make a friend of Mrs. Haccombe?—her preſent anger was againſt all hope; but it was not improbable that ſhe herſelf was deceived by lady Jemima, and might imagine ſhe was conferring a favor when ſhe was forwarding her going out to India. From the unguarded manner in which ſhe had mentioned it, this might be preſumed, and from

from the terms in which ſhe had ſpoken of lady Jemima, it was evident, that ſhe had forfeited her good opinion.

Seeing no one ſhe could cleave to, but thoſe on whom ſhe was caſt; and judging by herſelf, that the tale ſhe had to tell, muſt move their compaſſion, ſhe thought how ſhe might appeaſe Mrs. Haccombe's anger for the loſs of her china.

She firſt ſent to beg an audience of the houſe-keeper, who, with a meſſage of compliments, excuſed herſelf by exceſs of buſineſs from waiting on her, but begged to ſee her in her parlour. Peregrina crept down, but when near the bottom of the ſtairs, Mr. Haccombe popped out from a back parlour with his ſpectacles on: theſe he placed on his forehead, as now impediments to his *views*, and taking advantage of Peregrina's ſurpriſe, which had ſtopped her, he politely enquired after her, and expreſſed his fear that ſhe was ill, when

when he had before met her. In an unſteady voice ſhe returned him thanks, and ſaid, "ſhe had been much diſtreſſed in the morning." "What," ſaid he, ſmiling, "about the china---I ſuppoſe."

"Yes, Sir, I was ſo unfortunate as to do irreparable miſchief; but indeed it was owing to my being very much alarmed."

"O no, no, my dear madam---it is far from irreparable miſchief---I have agents in the factories that can procure me any thing; and if my wife has ſet her heart on that china, ſhe knows ſhe may eaſily have another ſet. I warrant you, Miſs Lamorne, money can purchaſe any thing, and I never regard expence."

"Might I then hope, Sir," ſaid Peregrina, moſt innocently, moſt unſuſpectingly, "that you would have the goodneſs to intereſt yourſelf for me with Mrs. Haccombe? She is, I fear, extremely angry with

with me; and indeed, I am ſo wretched, that if I do not find friends here, I know not where to ſeek them---for lady Jemima has deceived me, moſt cruelly deceived me."

Her laſt words were accompanied by ſuch evidences of diſtreſs, as would have excited compaſſion in a heart leſs open to female faſcination than the nabob's. He begged Miſs Lamorne to walk into the parlour he had come from; and there ſeating her at a due diſtance from himſelf, and having rung for his man, that he might tell him he was not at home to any body, he profeſſed himſelf extremely concerned at what he had juſt heard; and laying one foot acroſs the other, while with his hand he ironed his gloſſy ſilk ſtocking, in exact time with his words, he heſitating, ſtammering, repeating, amending, and beginning over and over again, with an emphatical *I ſay*, requeſted to know what was her ſituation.

It was of no more than a wiſh to be rid of her, that Peregrina ſuſpected Lady Jemima. Of the truth of any thing ſhe had aſſerted, ſhe made no queſtion, or ſhe might have doubted whether Sir Clifford had been as cruel as he was reported; but Lady Jemima ſeemed to ſuffer equally with herſelf, under the moroſeneſs of his temper; and conceiving that an illegitimate branch of the family *muſt* be an offence to him, ſhe acquieſced implicitly in the reſentment ſhe was told he bore her, and in the injunction impoſed on her, never to reveal her relation to him. It was not therefore her intention to make Mr. Haccombe her confidant: ſhe only meant, as Peregrina Lamorne, to make him her mediator with Mrs. Haccombe, and if poſſible her defence againſt the abhorred exportation to the Eaſt Indies. Had he been young and unmarried, her native delicacy might have made her cautious and reſerved, though then, brought up as ſhe had been, who could ſay ſhe would have diſtruſted

profeſſions of friendſhip? But here was no room for innocence and ignorance to doubt; for he was of a very ſober age, and married—two circumſtances that inſured his integrity—the natural fear of doing wrong, which Peregrina ſuppoſed every body felt, out of the queſtion.—Beſides, in her whole life, Peregrina had never been told ſhe was handſome—ſhe was not at all inclined to be out of humor with her own perſon, it is true: ſhe thought it what every body's was at her age, except where accidentally the hand of nature had failed, or where labor and poverty counteracted her. Her half ſiſter, the elder Miſs Byram, ſhe pitied as ſingularly unfortunate in her perſon; but Lady Jemima herſelf bore all the indications of former beauty: the young woman ſhe had travelled with was pretty: all the ladies ſhe had ſeen in the carriages ſhe had gazed at, appeared to her handſome, and with complexions far ſuperior to her own; and Mrs. Haccombe, though ſhe did not quite approve

approve her voluminous fat, was undoubtedly ſtill a very fine woman.

Kept therefore ignorant of her own powers, and the weakneſs of others; inclined to believe whatever was ſeriouſly told her, and ſuppoſing all the world infinitely better than herſelf, ſhe was fitted to become its dupe. She had indeed read of fraud, villany, and paſſion; but how difficult is it to apply the experience of books to the living world!—She had no confidence in her own judgment, no diſtruſt in her nature, no guile in her heart, no hypocriſy on her tongue, and therefore no caution.

On a repetition of Mr. Haccombe's queſtion, which was conveyed in a tone of ſoothing tenderneſs and parental intereſt, ſhe told him that ſhe had parted from Lady Jemima under the fulleſt aſſurance that ſhe ſhould not be ſent to India, for which ſhe had an unconquer-

able averſion; that ſhe had not the ſmalleſt objection to making the accompliſhments ſhe had gained ſerviceable to her maintenance, and would therefore very gladly engage in any ſituation proper for her, if Mrs. Haccombe would, as Lady Jemima aſſured her ſhe could, find ſuch a one for her.—That it was the alarm of hearing from Mrs. Haccombe that her going to India had been thought of, that had occaſioned the accident ſhe had ſo much cauſe to lament; and ſhe very much feared, unleſs ſome one had the goodneſs to interpoſe for her, that Mrs. Haccombe was irreconcileably offended.

CHAP. XVI.

THE nabob heard with attention; and when his fair client paufed, gave her all the encouragement that re-echoing her ſentiments with a thouſand *to-be-ſures* and *certainlies* could afford her: he agreed, that being compelled to do what is *againſt one's inclination* muſt be *very inimical to one's feelings;* and, that, to be ſure, if Lady Jemima had made a promiſe that ſhe ſhould not go out to India, why *a promiſe was a promiſe*, and every body certainly *ought, and was bound by that promiſe, to make good that promiſe.* After a long harangue, from which Peregrina clearly underſtood that Lady Jemima had impoſed, not only on herſelf but on Mrs. Haccombe, and that her ladyſhip, whatever might be her eſtimation in Ireland, was very ſlightly regarded on this ſide the water, Mr. Haccombe afforded her all the relief ſhe could

wiſh

wiſh for, in pledging himſelf for his lady's ample forgiveneſs, and for her giving up all thoughts of furthering lady Jemima's plan, the moment ſhe ſhould know it had not the ſanction of Miſs Lamorne's approbation. He ſaid, that as to her going out into the world to make the moſt of her talents, it was time enough to think of that meaſure; that ſhe was at preſent too young, and too little acquainted with the world to make it an eligible plan; but that, till it was her own choice to depart, his houſe was her home; and that as ſhe ſaw he had no family, he ſhould be extremely flattered by the honor of being allowed to adopt her for his daughter. He was growing ſtill more eloquent in praiſe of every virtue that could gain confidence, and Peregrina's heart was dilated with gratitude when the echoing hall announced Mrs. Haccombe's return from her morning's drive---he adviſed the young lady to retire, and promiſed to uſe his influence with his wife immediately.

He

He was as good as his word, and Mrs. Haccombe having juſt before, *entirely by accident*, met lord Surcheſter in Hyde Park, ſhe was in very good cue for making conceſſions: ſhe proteſted ſhe was not angry about the china; ſhe did not wiſh to ſend Miſs Lamorne even out of the houſe--- ſhe was extremely welcome to remain there as long as ſhe pleaſed; and lord Surcheſter, *whom ſhe had juſt had a glimpſe of*, had promiſed to dine with them.

Mrs. Haccombe then lounged up ſtairs to her dreſſing room, and at her huſband's requeſt, which ſhe was wonderfully ready to comply with, ſhe ſent to deſire Miſs Lamorne's company. Peregrina obeyed, not without ſome fear, which was however ſoon diſpelled; for Mrs. Haccombe politely begged her to think no more of the accident that had happened in the morning; and expreſſing her ſurpriſe at the duplicity of lady Jemima, ſhe aſſured her of her friendſhip and protection, and declared

declared herſelf happy in an opportunity of diſappointing the unkindneſs projected againſt her---not that there was, ſhe obſerved, any thing ſevere or unjuſtifiable in her ladyſhip's plan of fitting her out for the Indies:—it was a very reſpectable ſituation, and ſuch as young women, not only of genteel birth, but of diſtinguiſhed rank, had gladly accepted—nothing could be ſaid againſt it by any body who knew the world; but if Miſs Lamorne preferred private life *in a low ſtation*, ſhe certainly had a right to chuſe for herſelf. Peregrina was then diſmiſſed with a civil hope that ſhe would appear in good ſpirits at eight o'clock when they were to dine. She then retired to her own apartment, from whence ſhe wrote a note to Mr. Haccombe returning him her acknowledgments for his kind interference, and then reſuming her delightful ideas of grandeur and gaiety, ſhe made herſelf as ſmart as ſhe could in her mourning, to appear at the dinner table, Mrs. Haccombe's

combe's chamber-maid attending and aſſiſting her.

Enquiring of the ſervant where ſhe ſhould find the family, ſhe was directed to the front drawing room, and a footman who waited at the door of it, gave her admiſſion. Her expectations were formed to meet only the maſter and miſtreſs of the houſe; but the party conſiſted of themſelves and three other perſons, two of whom were gentlemen, the other a lady. The ſight of *ſtrangers*, though not quite ſo abhorrent to Peregrina's mind as it had been, drew her attention from the glaring glitter of the illuminated apartment, while Mr. Haccombe by name introduced her to the elder of the two gentlemen and to the lady. The younger man ſat at a diſtance, and ſeemed unnoticed. Mrs. Haccombe *wrapt up* rather than *dreſt* in a gold muſlin, was, as uſual, on the ſofa near a good fire. At her feet ſat the ſtranger lady, whoſe name

Peregrina caught as Mrs. Barnby. She ſeemed to be about twenty-two years of age, *embonpoint* as to her perſon, and ſtrikingly beautiful in features and complexion. The fineſt white and red, that could be bought at Bayley's or at Warren's, were blended on her glowing cheeks; and her dark eyes, fringed by the moſt ornamental eye laſhes, and arched by eyebrows, not truſted to the careleſs hand of nature, ſet off to the utmoſt advantage her blooming hue; a very fine ſet of teeth, well diſplayed by lips of the deepeſt carnation, completed her claim to the praiſe of extraordinary beauty, which really dazzled too forcibly to admit that criticiſm which might have detected many imperfections, had art been leſs ſedulous in aſſiſting nature. Dreſt in ſatin and lace, and decorated by a multitude of feathers, Mrs. Barnby appeared to Peregrina as a perſon of no ſmall conſequence; and left to herſelf, ſhe would perhaps have gueſſed her to have been at leaſt a ducheſs.

Her

Her entrance had interrupted a converſation between Mr. Haccombe and the elder gentleman, who was lord Surcheſter. It was reſumed on her taking a chair; and ſhe heard the unintelligible ſentences---" Well, my dear ſir, if you wiſh for a good thing under government, it is indiſputably in my power—contracts to be ſure are the thing at preſent—the miniſter dares not refuſe me—they know I have ſix votes under my thumb---ſo, my dear ſir, you have only to ſay what you will have---that is vacant---you underſtand me---and you may depend on my beſt ſervices."---An acknowledgment of obligation from the nabob---the moiety of a bow---and a hearty ſqueeze by the hand---followed theſe profeſſions; and buſineſs being diſpatched, the converſation became more general.

The young man who was ſitting againſt the farther ſide of the room, under one of the lights, had, on Peregrina's entrance, dropt

dropt his book, as if disturbed in his sleep. He seemed of a middle height, very dark complexion, and very thin visage: he was dreſt in deep mourning, and appeared either very ill, or very melancholy. Having picked up his book, he was pursuing his studies, when Mrs. Barnby having walked towards a glass near him to improve the exhibition of her ear-rings, bursting out into a laugh, exclaimed "Good God! why Edward is reading his book backwards: the laugh was general, with the exception only of Peregrina, who was very much struck with the oddity of his manners, and still more when, raising a countenance that might have been fine, but was now somewhat ghastly, he asked in a deep sonorous tone of voice "whether the way in which he held the book, made any alteration in the book itself---Is not the science as profound, are not the arguments as cogent," said he, "let me turn the book which way I please---what difference then can it make? and since free will is allowed to all

all mankind, and the grand ſcheme of providence cannot be fulfilled without free agency, why I am not entitled to read a book, which you muſt recollect too is mine by the compact of fair purchaſe, which way I will, is an exception from the general nature of things, that you cannot, I think, maintain on any ground."

"Do not anſwer him, Lucy," ſaid Mr. Haccombe---"you ſee---you ſee he is in one of his moods, not to be talked to."

"I think then he would have done much better to have kept out of the way," ſaid the lady of the houſe, poutingly.

"Why I do keep out of everybody's way, madam," replied the young man, "I am ſure nobody can ſay I occupy an inch more than my ſhare---you know, mamma, at your grand galas you always allow us eighteen inches of place, whatever we may have for ſupper."

Peregrina

Peregrina could ſcarcely forbear laughing at the calfiſh ſimplicity this ſentence was uttered with; but Mrs. Haccombe provoked, aſked him how often ſhe was to deſire him not to call her *mamma*.

"I ſhall do better when I am weaned, mamma," he replied, with provoking *naïvetè*, "old dad has promiſed me I ſhall go ſoon to Marybone charity ſchool, to learn my letters again; for I think I have forgot ſome of them---do you know" ſaid he, turning to lord Surcheſter, and grinning violently at him, "---yes, I dare ſay you do know, for you are a lord I am told; and I ſuppoſe all lords can read---I count over the letters every morning, and I never can make them twice alike---and indeed I do not believe any two people could reckon them alike.---Now you ſee for example, a dead man would leave out the B---a blind man would leave out the C---a negro would leave out I---a poor man would leave out O---an actor would

would think of nothing but Q---the Twinings, where mamma deals, know no letter but T---a quaker never heard of U---and a fine lady cannot frame her mouth to ſay W."

All this was unintelligible to Peregrina. Lord Surcheſter affected to laugh: Mr. Haccombe attempted without effect to ſtop the young man's tongue; Mrs. Haccombe requeſted him for Heaven's ſake to be quiet, while Mrs. Barnby gaped for an opportunity of rendering him more ridiculous.

Dinner was ſoon announced; and the black gentleman without the ſmalleſt attention to politeneſs, went firſt, and had ſeated and helped himſelf, when the laſt of the party had gained the table. Mr. Haccombe ſaid only, "Edward, you ſhould not do ſo"—"Nay," anſwered Edward, "ſelf preſervation, old dad, is the firſt law of nature: I knew you would be half an hour

hour complimenting about precedence; ſo I thought I would ſettle my own; beſide, Sir," added he ſternly, " who is there here, excepting indeed this magnifico my lord, that has any right to go before me. As for that miſs there"---ſaid he, looking at her, as ſhe was ſeating herſelf oppoſite to him---he ſtarted from his chair, claſped his hands together, and crying out " Aye, indeed---good God!---were you ever——?" He dropped his knife, turned paler than before, and was carried out of the room to all appearance in a fit.

Peregrina was too much terrified to preſerve her external compoſure, and gladly would ſhe have left the table; but the reſt of the party ſhewed no ſymptoms of alarm: lord Surcheſter, as a ſtranger to the family, enquired into the ſituation of the young gentleman; Mrs. Haccombe anſwered only by wiſhing they were fairly rid of him; but Mr. Haccombe more temperately replied, " that he was the ſon of a very

a very old friend of his, and was himſelf Sir Edward Bergholt, that he was heir to an eſtate of nearly eight thouſand a year, which, till he was of age, which would not be till he had finiſhed his twenty-fifth year, he had the troubleſome charge of, as his guardian; that he had at one time poſſeſſed a very ſound and highly improved underſtanding; but that a violent fever had, a ſhort time before, reduced him to a ſtate nearly approaching to idiocy if not inſanity."

It was impoſſible for Peregrina's unſophiſticated heart to recover its cheerfulneſs quickly, after ſhe had ſeen a fellow creature ſuffer ſo ſeverely under one of the greateſt of human afflictions:---it dwelt on her mind during dinner, notwithſtanding the novelty of all around her, and the civilities ſhe received from the gentlemen; and ſhe longed eagerly to hear more of Sir Edward Bergholt, who returned no more to them.

The

The ladies retired in due time to the drawing-room, where to the ſurpriſe of Peregrina, Sir Edward was pacing backward and forward in deep thought. She felt almoſt afraid of him; but the ladies by their unconcern diminiſhed her fear, which was ſoon relieved by his daſhing out of the apartment, in obedience to a rough hint of Mrs. Haccombe's, that he had better go elſewhere.

A yawning converſation now began between Mrs. Haccombe and Mrs. Barnby, from which Peregrina learnt that the latter was niece to Mr. Haccombe, and very much the humble ſervant of his lady. She was not at all deficient in her attention to their new gueſt; and ſhe appeared ſo good natured, that Peregrina felt comforted by learning from ſome orders given, that ſhe was to take up her reſidence, at leaſt for a time, in Devonſhire-Place.

Tea was brought: the gentlemen were ſummoned; and Mrs. Haccombe ſeemed not

not pleaſed at their long delay. Candor will it is hoped conclude that it was the abſence of her huſband, not of the peer, that ſhe lamented—Peregrina did not dare offer to undertake the tea-table, remembering too ſorely the diſaſter of the morning; but Mrs. Haccombe, as if it had been totally eraſed from her memory, bid her take her place. She obeyed, with a look of gratitude for the order, and nothing occurred to diſtreſs her.---Mrs. Haccombe, in ſomething like a pet, had commanded the tea equipage away, when the gentlemen entered, concluding a converſation as the door was ſhut.

CHAP. XVII.

BEHOLD Elizabeth Byram, now as Peregrina Lamorne, in a ſituation totally new to her, ſeated between one of the Magi, and one of the peers of Great Britain, each a candidate for her favor; for Mr. Haccombe had been completely captivated in the morning conference; and lord Surcheſter, ever on the gape for novelty, had made due uſe of his eyes at the dinner-table. Rather encouraged than awed by the attention paid her, Peregrina anſwered with ſelf-poſſeſſion and charming modeſty all their queries and good wiſhes —ſhe felt no reluctance in confeſſing her total ignorance of the world, and conſequently of many things familiar to its inhabitants: Mr. Haccombe appeared to promiſe himſelf much pleaſure in introducing her to the ſplendid entertainments of London: the peer, in a half whiſper, affected

affected to envy the atmoſphere the felicity of her breathing it. Mrs. Haccombe fanned herſelf poutingly, complained of the heat of the room, and begged the door might be opened, while Mrs. Barnby, who thought exactly of the heat of the room as her aunt did, though when the door was open ſhe ſhivered, remained a domino character, till on a ſudden the inſane baronet entered, and without noticing any one, deſired to have ſome tea.

"How do you do? Edward," ſaid Mr. Haccombe.

"Better—I have been thinking; and you know I am always the better for that."

"Nay," ſays Mrs. Haccombe, "in my opinion you are always the worſe for that, and every thing elſe."

"No, no," ſaid he, with an arch leer—"I am ſure I ſhall be better now—I have

it

it all before me; but I ſhall be very cautious—fight them all off, and then hang every one in his own nooſe. Ah, old dad," ſaid he, clapping Mr. Haccombe violently on the knee, "I have it all before me; and you ſhall be one of them, I aſſure you."

His guardian, in an authoritative tone deſired him to be more moderate---he obeyed; and drank his tea in violence, now and then glancing a look at Peregrina, but not attempting to explain his interrupted ſentence. She felt ſo afraid of him, that ſhe almoſt dreaded the office of pouring out his tea for him; but he remained perfectly quiet.

A whiſt table was ſet, and Peregrina was of courſe expected to join. As the party was ſo ſmall, and it was not to be expected that Sir Edward could make one, ſhe felt extremely hurt at her own ignorance, which compelled her to ſay, that ſhe not only knew

knew not the game, but had never in her life played a card.

" You can *play*, I have no doubt," ſaid Mr. Haccombe, ſtooping to a level with her eyes, " in a manner that would be much more gratifying than with a handful of paper."

" How is that? Sir," ſaid ſhe, recoiling for want of comprehenſion.

" Why, give us a little muſic," ſaid he; " I dare ſay that is in the number of your accompliſhments."

" I would willingly Sir, but here is no inſtrument."

" Do you not ſing?"

" Yes; but very poorly, without an inſtrument."

O, that you ſhall have---Lucy, where is your harp?---I have not ſeen it this age."

" My aunt's piano would be better," ſaid Mrs. Barnby. As for the harp I never practice---ſo I ſuppoſe it is not in order."

" I have taken the liberty of practiſing a little on it," ſaid Peregrina; " and it is not in bad condition."

The harp was fetched, and Peregrina, for the firſt time in her life, ſat down to entertain a circle, which was juſt large enough to be formidable; for had it conſiſted of more perſons, her *hearers* might have been fewer. She, however, conſidered it as a duty of gratitude to exert herſelf when requeſted, and accuſtomed as ſhe had been from her infancy to muſic, ſhe had none of the diſtruſts of ignorance---ſhe had not learnt to be afraid---in ſhort, ſhe did not know that what ſhe undertook was difficult, and happily for her, ſhe got

through a ſong of ſome execution, and great merit, to the ſatisfaction of all; for Sir Edward, when her harp came, had withdrawn; Mrs. Haccombe had entered into deep converſation with the peer, who lent an ear to her, and an eye to Peregrina; and Mrs. Barnby had fallen faſt aſleep.

After three or four calls on her voice, Mrs. Haccombe again propoſed cards, perhaps, as the more certain means of keeping his lordſhip's roving eyes fixed, at leaſt on a neutral object. The party ſeated themſelves, and Peregrina took a chair by her encouraging friend, Mrs. Barnby, and endeavoured to get ſome inſight into the game; but ſhe could make nothing of it. Before the firſt game was out, Sir Edward again made his appearance: he ſtood ſometimes by Mrs. Haccombe, and ſometimes by lord Surcheſter, and abruptly ſaid to the latter, "Why, both you, Mr. Peer, and my mamma, play your game very ill ---you don't fineſſe enough, my old boy."

Mr. Haccombe aſked him to ſit down and be quiet. "Not I," ſaid he, capering acroſs the room---"here's nobody but this queer Miſs to talk to; and I don't like her. I am afraid of her; for ſhe looks ſo like a great monſtrous ſhe-centaur I once met upon the road." He then gave a frightful ſcream, and bounced out of the room.

"Is Sir Edward always ſo terrifying?" ſaid Peregrina, to Mrs. Barnby, who was dealing.

"O no," ſaid ſhe, with a deep ſigh, "he is ſometimes very rational; but I aſſure you he never does any harm at any time—he is only very tireſome. We hope he will come to himſelf again."

The rubber concluded againſt lord Surcheſter and Mrs. Haccombe, who had been partners; and ſhe ſeemed much diſpleaſed---they had ſcored with gold---they paid

paid in gold; and Peregrina, to her aſtoniſhment, ſaw a ſum equal to all ſhe poſſeſſed in the world, paid by each of the loſers, for half an hour's amuſement.

Lord Surcheſter pleading another engagement went away, having made an agreement with Mr. Haccombe to attend him the next day but one, to ſome great man; and Mrs. Haccombe complaining of fatigue, ordered ſupper to be haſtened. Mrs. Barnby aſked Peregrina if it would be agreeable to her to ſpend ſome part of the next morning in ſhopping, to which ſhe readily aſſented, though almoſt ignorant what the term meant, but ſhe gueſſed it was pleaſure; and ſhe was well diſpoſed to be pleaſed.

Having ſat up till paſt twelve the preceding night, and been kept waking by the wonders ſhe had ſeen, Peregrina ſlept late in the morning, and was obliged to haſten her dreſs to be ready for breakfaſt;

but Mrs. Haccombe not having then made her appearance, ſhe was going to improve the time at the piano forte, when Mrs. Barnby joined her and engaged her in goſſip which beguiled her, it is true, of her leiſure, but ſerved to increaſe her favourable opinion of this condeſcending friend, who promiſed moſt liberally to give her every inſtruction ſhe could ſtand in need of, and to be her conſtant reſource in all difficulties. "Ah, my dear Miſs Lamorne," ſaid ſhe, taking her hand and ſighing deeply, "in your ſituation it is eaſy to adviſe; but in mine it requires a great deal of prudence to find out what is beſt. You do not know how I am diſtreſſed," added ſhe, with a look that ſignified her wiſh to be aſked; but Peregrina, who was fearful of intruding, ſuffered her to uſe her pleaſure, her eyes only expreſſing the intereſt ſhe took in every one's diſtreſs.

"Shall I tell you my ſtory?" ſaid Mrs. Barnby, "it is a melancholy one, I aſſure you;

you ; and you muſt, on your life, promiſe never to divulge it. I am certain you would not. I am ſure I may truſt you."

"No, do not, madam," interrupted the trembling girl---"I ſcarcely know myſelf whether I am to be truſted---I am young and very ignorant, and you may repent your confidence; for I fear, though I would not for the world break my promiſe, yet if any body were cunningly to ſet about extorting a ſecret from me, I fear I have not prudence enough to keep it. I have always found myſelf ſadly deficient whenever prudence was neceſſary."

"Well, my dear girl," ſaid Mrs. Barnby, patting her roſy cheek, "you are a good creature, and I am ſure would do nobody any harm---only promiſe me not to tell what I ſhall tell you."

"I will promiſe upon my honour, madam, not willingly to reveal it."

" That is enough, my dear, I will truſt you. You underſtand, I ſuppoſe, that Mr. Haccombe is my uncle, and a very kind uncle he has been to me. I was married, when quite a child, to Mr. Barnby, a man many years older than myſelf, and whom I never loved, but I did it out of duty to my parents:———he has been dead a little more than a twelvemonth, ſo that, juſt when I came of age, I was a widow. My uncle and aunt took me home to them; and here I found Sir Edward Bergholt, who was then quite in his right ſenſes. He became attached to me; and I cannot ſay I was indifferent to him: my excellent uncle diſcovered it, and told us, that as I was his niece, and Sir Edward's inferior in fortune, and that as Sir Edward was his ward, and obliged, unleſs he would forfeit all his eſtate to an hoſpital, to marry with his concurrence before he was five and twenty, he thought he ſhould not be acting the part of an honeſt man, ſhould he ſuffer him to attach himſelf to one of his

his guardian's family, who muſt be ſo much benefited by his eſtate: he therefore forbid our union. It was this diſappointment that deranged poor Edward, who is only kept within bounds by my being in the houſe, though he never ſeems to take much notice of me. We hope for his recovery; and did I not know my uncle's high ſpirit and exceſſive diſintereſtedneſs, I ſhould flatter myſelf, that the having ſeen how poor Edward has ſuffered, might prevail on him; but I cannot hope it, though I know he would do any thing in his power for me; for he is one of the beſt men in the world."

Peregrina expreſſed, in unaffected language, her ſincere concern for Mrs. Barnby's ſituation, and the ſenſe of her own happineſs, in being placed under the protection of ſo excellent a man as Mr. Haccombe. "I am ſure," ſaid Mrs. Barnby, wiping her eyes, "my dear Miſs Lamorne, *you* may reckon on him as a friend

---he

---he will be a father to you; for you have won his heart by your amiable deportment---indeed we are all quite in love with you. Never, I charge you, have any ſcruples with my uncle if he offers you kindneſſes;——for you cannot do him a greater favour than putting it in his power to oblige you; and to ſlight his kindneſs is to affront him."

The entrance of a ſervant put an end to this intereſting converſation. Mrs. Barnby affectionately ſhook Peregrina's hand; and the family ſoon after dropped in.

At breakfaſt the play was propoſed for the evening's amuſement, and Peregrina's heart bounded with joy, at the proſpect of having, realized to her ſight, thoſe ſcenes ſhe had often read with rapture. The play was Lear; and her expectations, though ſcarcely knowing how to form themſelves, gave the idea of ſupreme felicity on hearing it. She ſecretly thanked

lady

lady Jemima for caſting her out upon the world, ſince it afforded her an opportunity of ſeeing a play, and had ſecured to her ſuch friends as Mr. Haccombe and Mrs. Barnby!

When their morning was adjuſting, Mrs. Barnby aſked Mrs. Haccombe to accompany them in their trading circuit; but ſhe was diſpoſed to ride on horſeback ---how lord Surcheſter was engaged was not generally known. Sir Edward, who was preſent, and had behaved wonderfully well, as if he underſtood that Mrs. Haccombe's not going with them was an inconvenience, elected himſelf into their number. Mrs. Barnby, with a look of ſoftneſs, accepted this as a civility, but Peregrina, leſt the baronet ſhould again break out into his eccentricities, heartily wiſhed he had been leſs attentive.

The ſplendid coach, with two beaus for footmen, was ready as ſoon as Peregrina

had finiſhed her noon toilet; for the appearance ſhe had been uſed to make, was now far from ſatisfying her; and ſhe feared, not a little, that ſhe ſhould diſgrace dear Mrs. Barnby. With a bluſh on her cheeks that aroſe from anxious haſte, ſhe ſkipped down to the drawing-room, where ſhe found only Sir Edward. Seeing no one to protect her againſt his oddities, ſhe was retreating, when he called to her by the ſtyle of *Miſs*: ſhe was afraid of provoking him, and therefore ſtopt. Coming up to her, and ſtaring full in her face, in a deep voice, he cried out, "What do you too paint your cheeks? O, I am glad of it---it will do me good---O you cannot think what good it will do me---it will quite pleaſe me, I aſſure you"---he was coming ſtill nearer her, when obeying only her fears, ſhe ſcreamed, and was near falling againſt the door. He changed his countenance, and ſaying, very gravely and rationally, "I beg your pardon---you have heard, I dare ſay, of my infirmity, and will

will forgive it"---he took her hand and led her to a chair at the bottom of the room, himſelf ſtanding in the receſs of the window neareſt to her; he ſpoke not another word, but ſeemed in deep thought of the moſt melancholy kind. He then, as if deſirous of making Peregrina ſpeak, talked not abſurdly of the weather; but juſt as ſhe heard Mrs. Barnby coming down ſtairs, he was beginning to launch forth into nonſenſe, and glad ſhe was to ſee her enter the room.

CHAP. XVIII.

THEY all fallied out together on the morning buſineſs; and Peregrina ſoon forgot, in the ſurrounding novelties, her fear of Sir Edward, and his odd ſpeech to her. To the moſt faſhionable linen-draper's in Bond-ſtreet, Mrs. Barnby firſt directed her courſe; and here her young friend was delighted with an infinite variety of the moſt tempting manufactures, and an aſſemblage of morning beauties, to whom Mrs. Barnby introduced her:---among theſe were Lady Kerbell and her two elegant daughters, whoſe highly faſhionable and perfectly eaſy manners made Peregrina feel, as it is the good breeding of great ladies to make little ones feel, very inſignificant. Lady Grace Moray, the eldeſt of theſe young ladies, ſeeing Sir Edward, immediately linked her arm within his, and ſtalking with him at a rate he was not

not diſpoſed to keep up with, to the fartheſt part of the ſhop, ſhe there ſeated herſelf on the counter with a genteel ſpring, and holding him faſt by his coat, began to talk to him in a cruel ſtyle of childiſh banter, which he bore with more patience than Peregrina had expected. Her ladyſhip's attention was called off from him to look at the moſt beautiful muſlin, and the greateſt bargain ever ſeen---it was a muſlin embroidered in colored ſilks, the ill-paid work of ſome needy young woman! and which at a profit of about two hundred per cent. was now offered to this daughter of prodigality; but the lady was tall above the middle ſize; and there being a doubt of the length, after ſhe had accepted it, and ordered it to be ſet down to her, ſhe bid Sir Edward hold it againſt her ſhoulder to ſee if it would do: he obeyed; but in obeying her, he either miſchievouſly or inadvertently, walked completely thro' the beautiful muſlin. Lady Grace colored, and was beginning to ſcold, when Lady Suſan

Sufan, her ſiſter, coming up to her, and running her hand through the rent, with a violent laugh, and ſomething akin to an oath, proteſted ſhe deſerved it for ſetting Edward to meaſure it---"Well," ſaid Lady Grace, pouting, "the man muſt take it again, for I cannot think of having it now." "No, indeed, my lady," replied the ſhopkeeper, bowing very low, "the muſlin, before it was worked, coſt me more than I offered it your ladyſhip at; and I cannot take it again." "Here, Edward," cried Lady Sufan, beckoning him; "come, you muſt make Grace a preſent of this muſlin: come, we all know you are very rich and ſpend nothing---come; will it pay for it now, dear? or will it draw upon guardian." "Neither," replied Sir Edward, with folded arms and a ſneer of contempt—— "what money I have to ſpare I will lay out in bronze for your ladyſhip's complexion; for I think your face wants an additional covering over its two coats of white lead and rouge." Lady Sufan would have laughed;

laughed; but ſhe was too much mortified to command her features, while Lady Grace, who forgot her recent vexation in the pleaſure of ſeeing herſelf revenged on her ſiſter, dropped the tattered muſlin and the ſubject, to repeat Sir Edward's ſarcaſm. All was now laugh, but would ſoon have been malice, had not Lady Kerbell, with the utmoſt indulgence, interpoſed, by ordering the muſlin to be ſet down to her. The matter was then adjuſted; and Peregrina was in raptures at the goodneſs of the counteſs, little ſuſpecting that the tradeſman had now a worſe chance than ever of getting his money---he ſighed as he bowed, in gratitude for the favour; and the ladies retreated to their carriage, leaving Peregrina not able to comprehend how ſuch fine ladies could have ſuch coarſe manners; but ſhe ſoon ſolved all doubt by recollecting how little ſhe knew of *life*.

Large ſums of money had been talked of; and expenſive goods had been placed before her eyes, till guineas appeared ſhillings, and moderate muſlins hop-ſacks.—Mrs. Barnby ſuffered nothing to be removed till ſhe had politely offered it to Miſs Lamorne's notice; and ſhe, aſhamed of buying nothing, ſuffered herſelf to be tempted by a *very delicate, moſt charming*, and *uncommonly cheap little* ſprigged muſlin, which *would make the niceſt ſecond-mourning dreſs in the world.* It dipped pretty deep into her third guinea; but the temptation was irreſiſtable—it was the firſt purchaſe ſhe had ever made; and ſhe was in Paradiſe.

Sir Edward, who had ſat on a ſtool, thumping the ground with one of the ſhop meaſures, when he ſaw ſhe too had purchaſed, with a ſneering contraction of his features, aſked her if ſhe too *bought tinder.* She made him no anſwer: Mrs. Barnby ordered her goods to be ſent immediately,

for *ſhe ſhould die to ſee* them at home; and they ſet forward to a haberdaſher's, where pretty nearly the ſame folly of buying, though not of *reading* was played over again; but Peregrina could ſpare here only a few ſhillings for a ſimple head ornament.

A warehouſe, where dreſſes hung up by ſcores, inviting arms, and where ſizes were fitted by gueſs and coaxed in by dint of tugging, with the prevailing aſſurance that they all *ſat like wax*; next drew Mrs. Barnby's attention.——Here ſhe bought *in eſſe* what ſhe had before bargained for *in potentiâ*, and ſhe was delighted with her bargains, which called forth all Sir Edward's aſperity.——Nothing here was at all within the reach of Miſs Lamorne's pocket; and ſhe carried about three and forty ſhillings home.

Dreſſing anew for the evening's engagement occupied all the ſpace before dinner,

ner, which was order'd at an early hour. Mrs. Haccombe made her appearance at the head of the table in her morning dreſs, and in a ſtate of more than uſual languor: ſhe complained of a head-ach and univerſal ailment, which ſhe ſaid would not admit of her going to the play; but ſhe ſtrenuouſly rejected the polite offer of Mrs. Barnby, and the more ſincere earneſtneſs of Peregrina to ſhare her ſolitude, and they left her alone; not long indeed to remain ſo; for lord Surcheſter had called in the morning, and ſhe had not failed to tell him that the family were engaged to the play, and that ſhe ſhould not go.

In the long drive from Devonſhire-place to Drury-lane, Mr. Haccombe could not repreſs within common bounds the intereſt he took in Miſs Lamorne's ignorance of what ſhe was to ſee. Mrs. Barnby too loaded her with kind expreſſions, while Sir Edward went into his corner, and ſeemed

ſeemed either aſleep or too much abſtracted to know what was the ſubject of their converſation.

Mrs. Haccombe's places were called for: the box door opened, and Peregrina had an oblique view of the ſtage and a full one of the company on the oppoſite ſide of the houſe. She thought the world could not afford another ſpectacle ſo charming, and ſhe halted, with admiration, till Mrs. Barnby, who had politely put her firſt, reminded her that ſhe was to go forward. When ſhe could turn her attention to the ſtage, ſhe was very ſorry to find the ſecond act begun. Mr. Haccombe had placed himſelf behind her; and in a low voice was every moment endeavouring to extort her expreſſions of admiration, but the intereſt of the play ſoon fixed her, and, excepting between the acts, ſhe had no more leiſure for gazing.

But ſhe found her enjoyment of a very different kind from that ſhe had felt on entering: her heart, naturally prone to genuine pity, ſunk under the ſcenic diſtreſs; and the gliſtening tears, which one moment trembled on her cheeks and the next fell on her lap, were inadequate to diſcharge its emotions. As the diſtreſs heightened, her affliction increaſed; and when the cataſtrophe was before her eyes, untaught by faſhion how to expreſs or how to diſguiſe her feelings; in all the native language of her ſimplicity ſhe turned to Mrs. Barnby, and throwing her arms round her neck for ſupport, ſhe cried out audibly;—"Oh! it is too much!—I ſee *my* father die again,"—and fell into ſtrong hyſterics.

The company in the boxes were alarmed, and many ſtood up to ſee what had happened. Mrs. Barnby, never endued with much preſence of mind, was as unaiding as an infant; Mr. Haccombe, in trepi-

trepidation, fidgetted on all ſides as if hunting for her relief; while Sir Edward, who had ſat mute and motionleſs the whole evening, with one hand opened the box-door, with the other made a ſign to a gentleman near him, and in leſs than two minutes with his aſſiſtance conveyed her to one of the waiting-rooms, the reſt of the party following. She was there ſoon recovered; and Sir Edward calling out in his uſual ſtyle, in anſwer to Mr. Haccombe's tender enquiries,—"Why, old dad, who but you would have brought a miſs for the firſt time to ſee old Lear go mad?"—quitted them, childiſhly earneſt, leſt he ſhould miſs the beginning of the farce.

Peregrina, notwithſtanding the weakneſs ſhe felt from her diſturbed ſpirits, was unwilling to loſe the remainder of her pleaſure; and Mrs. Barnby, not very unwiſely, ſuggeſting that a diverting farce might raiſe her again to cheerfulneſs, they re-

returned and ſat out the entertainment, not however perfectly to the ſatisfaction of Peregrina, who was hurt by the general attention her indiſpoſition had attracted towards her.

Before the curtain dropped, Sir Edward ſignified his intention to be gone; and nothing could prevail on his crazy impatience to wait for his company. They reached home only a few ſeconds before him, and found Mrs. Haccombe ſitting by the drawing-room fire with a book on the table by her, which, by being turned down and its face open, declared how well ſhe had been employed. Sir Edward, who nearly overtook the party at the drawing-room door, ſprang towards the table, and ſeized the book, as if very curious to diſcover what was Mrs. Haccombe's ſubject of ſtudy. He interrupted the enquiries ſhe was going to make, by a loud laugh, crying out, "Why ods-life, dear mamma, your are very clever, you read your books with-

without their being cut open—pray, now do tell me, how do you get a peep at a duodecimo page." Mrs. Haccombe who really was not aware of the circumſtance, and who had ſnatched the firſt book ſhe laid her hand on to make a ſhew with, was about to contradict him; but it was a truth not to be denied; and ſhe looked a little ſilly, while he triumphed moſt provokingly, placing the book open on his head, and crying out repeatedly, and in the tone of a ſhow-man; "Who will read my pretty book? I will ſhew you a wonderful pretty book—my mamma's own, very own book" —Mrs. Haccombe endeavoured to raiſe her voice above his, and prudently ſhe did ſo; for it was her intereſt to prevent any enquiry that ſhould have diſcovered how very lately her friend the peer had taken his leave.

Accuſtomed as the family were to the noiſe and nonſenſe of their inſane inmate, what he now vociferated was little attended to;

to; and he ceaſed, as ſoon as Mrs. Haccombe had aſked what the play was, to anſwer her, by ſaying, in contradiction to the reſt of the company, that the play was the Careleſs Huſband! Every one attempted to aſſiſt his memory; but he ſeemed convinced he was right; and Peregrina was more ſhocked at this inſtance of derangement than at any ſhe had yet witneſſed. He was at laſt ſuffered to enjoy his error; and he began commenting on the characters of Sir Charles Eaſy, Lord Foppington, &c. then breaking out, as if with new abſurdity, he declared the ſcene between *Lord Foppington* and *Polonius* inimitable: he then talked of Ophelia and Miranda, which ſhewed his ideas to have wandered ſtill farther: he ſpoke with aſperity, that ſeemed to have a meaning, of the Queen in Hamlet; and ended by launching out in praiſe of the excellence he had really witneſſed in the performance of Cordelia. He then ordered his man to attend him to his chamber; and, without

ſtaying

ſtaying ſupper with the family, withdrew for the night, leaving Mrs. Haccombe very well pleaſed at his departure, Mr. Haccombe fretted at his oddity, Mrs. Barnby very penſive, and Peregrina in doubt how ſhe could endure living in the ſame houſe with one ſo terribly unfit for ſociety.

She went to bed, with a reſolution that nothing ſhould prevent her riſing early in the morning, to keep up by practice thoſe accompliſhments on which ſhe knew ſhe muſt, at one time or other, and how ſhe knew not, depend wholly for ſupport. The inroad ſhe had made on her ſlender purſe, diſtreſſed her in the recollection; and ſhe made a ſecret vow, that no fancied neceſſity ſhould ſeduce her into a competition with perſons in a ſtation of life ſo far above that ſhe muſt look on as her's. An unquiet ſleep, in which ſhe fancied herſelf expoſed to real danger from Sir Edward's derangement, ſucceeded to her

mortifying reflections: ſhe ſlept again late in the morning, and in her way down ſtairs, met a meſſage from Mr. Haccombe requeſting to ſee her on buſineſs in the library.

Thither ſhe immediately went; and found a reception that diſſipated every chagrin from a mind not yet taught to ſuſpect. He took her hand as ſhe entered, and with a look that ſhe conſtrued into the moſt flattering benignity, he enquired after her health, and expreſſed his concern for his own want of thought which had the preceding evening ſo ſeverely tried her feelings. He then with much circumlocution and abundance of *flocking-ſtroking*, congratulated himſelf on the pleaſure of having her in his family, hoped ſhe would not for a long time think of any other ſituation, and at laſt came to the point on which he had requeſted the interview, namely that of enquiring, with the moſt fatherly regard, and in the moſt delicate mode

mode of interrogation, how ſtood her finances.

Peregrina ſcarcely knew what to anſwer: ſhe was aſhamed to own how poorly ſhe was equipped for her *debût* in London; and ſhe juſt knew enough of the world to perceive that ſuch a confeſſion would have an appearance her ſpirit would be hurt at: ſhe therefore heſitated, and thus gave Mr. Haccombe the anſwer he wiſhed for. He told her, with an air of encouraging frankneſs, that he well knew young perſons, brought up by the great, were not often as much conſidered as they ſhould be, in the article of expence—that he underſtood from Mrs. Haccombe, that Lady Jemima Byram claimed no other right over her than that which friendſhip and protection gave her; and he ſuppoſed, that as it was her wiſh that ſhe ſhould ſeek a ſituation of emolument, her ladyſhip had not provided her for a winter's amuſement in London,

which he hoped ſhe would not ſcruple to accept from him. He then, with all the politeneſs and grace his artificial manners and awkward perſon could command, preſented her with a draft on his banker for fifty pounds, and begged that, as often as ſhe wiſhed this trifle renewed, ſhe would do him the honor only to make the application *in perſon*.

The inexperienced girl, who ſaw only the merit of the action, burſt into tears of gratitude, as ſhe accepted this unſuſpected generoſity, and in a voice juſt audible, thanked Heaven that, when moſt ſhe needed protection, had ſent her ſuch friends as thoſe ſhe was now with. Mr. Haccombe then entered into a converſation with her, the drift of which was, could ſhe but have ſeen it, to find out who was likely to call him to account, ſhould he in due time open more fully his intention. Here Peregrina was on her guard in one particular, but unfortunately in that which

which it was leaſt her intereſt to be punctilious in. To Mr. Haccombe's enquiries reſpecting her connexions, ſhe anſwered in a way that led him to ſuppoſe her, as Lady Jemima had repreſented her, a young perſon whom ſhe had voluntarily educated. She ſpoke of herſelf as an orphan who never knew a mother's care, and was kept in ignorance who was her other parent: She could name no friend but Lady Jemima; and from *her* friendſhip Mr. Haccombe, by this time, pretty well knew little danger to his ſchemes was to be apprehended.

The hour of breakfaſt broke off the converſation: dreſſing for Kenſington-gardens, in company with *charming* Mrs. Barnby and wearifome Sir Edward, deſtroyed the morning and noon——a third dreſſing, a late dinner, an immenſe rout in the evening, at which Mrs. Haccombe diſplayed all her ſublimities, and a *petit ſouper*, at which Lord Surcheſter aſſiſted and

and the buſineſs of the contract was whiſpered over as if going on well, completed the murder of the ſecond day; and Peregrina began to perceive that the London day divided itſelf almoſt naturally into the varieties of pleaſure and fatigue.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

THUS became this daughter of affliction initiated into polite life; and by degrees ſhe grew as fond of it, and as unfit for any other, as the reſt of the diſſipated world. She had, to her very great ſurpriſe, received from Dublin a number of packages ſhe did not expect; theſe were the accoutrements her kind friend lady Jemima had deſigned to fit her out for ſale with. Mrs. Haccombe, who in proportion as her own ſituation with lord Surcheſter became more arranged, increaſed her attention towards Peregrina, explained the myſtery of theſe valuable preſents, not much to lady Jemima's credit; and ſeemed more than ever delighted with the diſappointment of her ladyſhip's ſcheme. The fine cloaths were laid by till a fit ſeaſon for making uſe of them; and Peregrina, to her infinite ſatisfaction, found that even this

this little circumſtance ſerved to draw her into a cloſer contact with her new and ineſtimable friends, every one of whom ſeemed to conſider her as their peculiar *protegée*;—for Mr. Haccombe eſcorted her in public; and if he did not always accompany her in her viſits to newly-formed connexions, uniformly gave her the uſe of his carriage. Mrs. Haccombe, when otherwiſe engaged herſelf, always recommended her to her huſband's care; and *ſweet* Mrs. Barnby ſmoothed all difficulties, talked away all ſcruples, flattered, encouraged, and idolized, till Peregrina ſcarcely knew what her original opinions had been. Still, however, reſpect for Mr. Byram's memory, which ſhe conceived her unallowed claim might injure, and fear of Sir Clifford, kept her from communicating any one of thoſe circumſtances which lady Jemima had ſo artfully recommended to her concealment.

Mr.

Mr. Haccombe, whoſe eyes were ſoon blinded towards his wife's conduct, by his fixed attention on Peregrina, and by lord Surcheſter's obtaining for him the promiſed contract, loſt no opportunity of increaſing his influence over the mind of his young charge; but he ſoon found that the hopes he had conceived from the avidity with which ſhe ſwallowed the bait of pleaſure, would be diſappointed, ſhould he expect from her any other ſpecies of gratitude, than that which his boaſted parental affection claimed. All the little ſhallow art, with which, in his many converſations with her, he tried to ſhake her prejudices by informing her how *the world* thought and acted, had no other effect than that of obtaining from her, reiterated proteſtations, the ſincerity of which he could not doubt, from her native ingenuouſneſs, that rather than conform to the practice of the world, where her heart taught her that practice was corrupt, ſhe would renounce it and all its deluſions at

once.---She ſeemed to refer all her moral actions here, to an hereafter Mr. Haccombe had not lately cared about; and a ſtrange notion ſhe entertained, that things were only good or bad as they would appear at that teſt, was too ſtrong for all his French metaphyſics, and half-learnt materialiſm. When he quoted Voltaire and D'Alembert, poor Peregrina had no better arguments to anſwer with, than thoſe the ſermon on the mount and St. Paul's old-faſhioned epiſtles furniſhed her with; for Peregrina had not ſtudied controverſy, nor knew that it was neceſſary for a chriſtian to be armed againſt the ſubtlety and malice of a chriſtian.

Perceiving nothing was to be gained by the common means; and being too prudent to riſque his character by any violent uſe of the rights of protectorſhip, he wiſely endeavoured to conquer his paſſion, which he found growing rather more ſe-

rious than he had intended; but he had been ſo little uſed to conqueſts of this kind, that the buſineſs was awkward, eſpecially whilſt every day produced him a new impediment in ſome new charm the not-yet perfect beauty of Miſs Lamorne diſcovered. He therefore changed at once his plan and his opinions, and reſolved, ſince he could not get the better of his paſſion, to give it, under due regulation, its way; and conjecturing from the frequent diſappointments Mrs. Haccombe's *indiſpoſition* proved to her partaking the family engagements, that her life was not a very good one, he perſuaded himſelf ſhe had death in her countenance, and he nominated Peregrina Lamorne as her ſucceſſor, recklefs of what the world might ſay or think.

Mrs. Barnby was at the ſame time Mrs. Haccombe's *confidante*, and as a dutiful niece, a zealous promoter of all her uncle's

uncle's views: her buſineſs was to ſteer nicely between Scylla and Charybdis, and to ſerve herſelf by keeping ſuch a hold on Peregrina's affection, as ſhould prevent her ever preſuming to caſt a thought towards Sir Edward Bergholt, whoſe recovery ſhe ſeemed daily ro expect; but of this encroachment on her prior rights ſhe had no cauſe to be afraid; for though Peregrina could not but infer from what he now and then was, that, had Sir Edward been of ſane mind, he might have been very agreeable, ſhe had conceived ſuch a horror of his infirmity, and it was at ſome times ſo terrifying, and at others ſo tireſome, that ſhe moſt cordially wiſhed him out of the houſe.

But delighted as ſhe was with the ſplendor ſhe lived in, and with the entertainments and gay ſociety of the town, it was an unpleaſant reflection to Peregrina, that all, which with ſo much earneſtneſs ſhe

ſhe had been taught, and with ſo much application had learned, was now becoming a mere wreck. She had no time for any thing but pleaſure; and in pleaſure ſhe was forced to ſink thoſe painful remembrances which ſhe fancied ſhe had no other means of diſcarding.

CHAP. XX.

In the multitudes that viſited at Mrs. Haccombe's, and who formed her routs, attended her concerts, and graced her balls, there was, as now in all large circles of diſſipation, a motley mixture of all ſorts; and perſons, who ſome years ago would never have been ſeen or named together, were ſociable, if not intimate. And ſo it muſt be wherever vanity is to be gratified only by numbers; for that which is extenſive can never be ſelect. At Mrs. Haccombe's, the faulty peereſs never was denied admiſſion: at any rate her title was an honor, and her ticket was an embelliſhment to the frame of a pier glaſs, or the more elegant card-rack. Such ladies formed Mrs. Haccombe's ſecond claſs of idols: thoſe who had elevated rank and unblemiſhed character, and an unencumbered fortune, ſtood firſt, but were few in number,

ber, and were ſuch as by civilities, ſimilar to thoſe ſhe had exhibited lately at Bath, ſhe had bound to take notice of her in London. The throng of commoners included all who, whether with the means or without them, had ſpirit enough to make a figure. For the retired decencies of life, Mrs. Haccombe confeſſed ſhe had no taſte.

Amongſt the moſt reſpectable of this aſſemblage was the widow Counteſs of Cottiſbrooke, a woman of very eſtimable underſtanding and character. She had been left, early in life, ſole parent of two ſons and a daughter, whoſe education ſhe had attended to with the moſt truly maternal ſedulity. Her eldeſt ſon, now in his twentieth year, was on his travels: her ſecond ſon, Hamilton Courtland, was in the army; and her daughter lady Eſſex, who had juſt attained her ſeventeenth year, was ſtill under her care. She had alſo under her guardianſhip a right honourable

nourable heireſs, lady Almerina Delaford, who, the laſt of a good family, had been left with a very ſlender fortune to mend it by marriage or by a penſion. She had been educated at a faſhionable boarding ſchool, from which on her mother's death, about two years before, lady Cottiſbrooke, diſliking the high tone the young lady had aſſumed, by living chiefly with her inferiors in rank, had removed her to her own houſe; and the preſent earl having ſhewn, immediately on ſeeing her, how much he was captivated by her perſon, the conſideration of money which he did not want had been thrown aſide; and the young couple were engaged to marry on his lordſhip's return.

This reſpectable woman had, from her firſt interview with Peregrina, conceived an affection for her, and was one of thoſe who moſt diſtinguiſhed her by invitations to her houſe, and familiar notice in public. She ſeemed to wiſh for an intimacy between

betweeen her daughter lady Eſſex and Miſs Lamorne; but intimacy here could never produce friendſhip; for the young lady was very little removed from idiocy: at leaſt ſhe was, at ſeventeen, what ſhe might have been at ſix; and all attempts to ſtrengthen her powers, or to faſten inſtruction on her mind, had hitherto proved fruitleſs.

Lady Almerina Delaford, who traced a pedigree from the conqueſt, and wiſely judged that did ſhe not maintain her importance herſelf, it muſt now in its old age decline, and yield to honors more flouriſhing as better nouriſhed, diſdained to follow the example of her guardian, whom in her heart ſhe deſpiſed, and whom her tongue not unfrequently vilified with the opprobrium of folly and weakneſs. In all things where her mother's ſuperior authority did not reſtrain her, lady Eſſex was governed by the more impoſing dogma of lady Almerina; and lady Cottiſ-

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brooke had more than once ſeen cauſe to repeat that ſtrictneſs of conſcience which had made her take under her foſtering wing one who was almoſt uniformly an obſtacle to her beſt intentions.

In Peregrina Lamorne ſhe thought ſhe ſaw a counterbalance to this inconvenience; and having learnt from the ſtill-ingenuous girl, that however flattering her ſituation with Mrs. Haccombe was, it was neither a natural one nor a permanent one, lady Cottiſbrooke caſt about for the means to draw her into her own family; and at a ball at lady Kerbell's, mentioned her wiſh to Peregrina, who, with a ſigh, recollecting that ſhe *ought* to get her living, referred her ladyſhip to Mrs. Haccombe.

Lady Cottiſbrooke called the next morning; and being introduced to the drawing-room, ſhe found there only Mr. Haccombe, who was in truth waiting in hopes of catching five minutes' converſation with Peregrina

Peregrina before ſhe went out. Her ladyſhip without ſcruple opened her intention to him, by ſaying that ſhe underſtood from Miſs Lamorne, that her ſituation was but temporary, and that it was her intention to engage herſelf as governeſs or companion in a reſpectable family. Mr. Haccombe, cool, artful, and whenever the world was his witneſs, maſter of himſelf, replied with many acknowledgments of her ladyſhip's goodneſs, but aſſured her that, however humbly Miſs Lamorne might think of herſelf, and diffidently of the ſteadineſs of her friends, it was not his or Mrs. Haccombe's deſign ever to part from her—they had adopted her as a daughter; and they ſhould ever regard her as ſuch. Lady Cottiſbrooke, mortified at her diſappointment, ſtaid only to hear Mrs. Haccombe, with a profuſion of adulatory nothings, confirm her huſband's account, and then withdrew.

CHAP. XXI.

FAR different from the ſpecies of regard lady Cottiſbrooke honored Peregrina with, was the treatment ſhe received from the Counteſs of Kerbell, and her daughters lady Grace and lady Suſan Moray. Lord Kerbell was obliged to live abroad; and her ladyſhip was ſent over to try to put off, by way of marriage, their hopeful offspring, who had been educated in France for the purpoſe. This was the third ſeaſon of trial; and an exhibition of daughters being a matter rather more expenſive than the very ſlender finances of the houſe of Moray could bear often repeated, the earl, who had been a libertine, and was ſunk into a ſavage, had declared, with his uſual firmneſs of tone and manner, it ſhould be the laſt winter he would pay for trumpery for his *mauxes*, who being now, in ſpite of their ſkill in the *fine arts*,

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on the untoward ſide of thirty, were rendered almoſt deſperate.

Lady Grace had fixed her attentions on Sir Edward Bergholt, whoſe unfortunate ſtate of mind ſeemed to bring him within her reach; and Lady Sufan was not without views in the ſame quarter, till, through their common friend, Mrs. Haccombe, ſhe became acquainted with the Courtland family. Lady Almerina Delaford took care that no lady ſhould break her heart in ignorance, for Lord Cottifbrooke's ſake; for all within the circle of her acquaintance knew him for her betrothed; but Hamilton Courtland, though to be ſure a younger brother, and with a fortune to make, was no deſpicable conqueſt; and Lady Sufan, by that mode of behaviour which teaches a young man to be aſhamed of being behindhand, flattered herſelf ſhe had ſecured him.

In

In the frequent meetings of the feveral parties of faſhion, Lord Surcheſter had not eſcaped the flirtations of theſe jocund nymphs; but their prudent mother was here cautious. She knew the earl's character; and ſhe was convinced that his regards could never tend to the *eſtabliſhment* of her daughters: ſhe therefore kept him at a due diſtance; and he having other engagements on his hands, did not much thwart her maternal care.

The beauty, the inborn elegance, the ſoft manners, and the happy gift of univerſally pleaſing, which graced Peregrina Lamorne, had, early in her introduction to the world, given great offence to Lady Kerbell, who, with the taſk before her, of marrying her daughters, and the diſmal option of returning to their eagle-inhabited caſtle in Caithneſs, ſaw, with envy and the moſt rancorous ſpite, all her arts caſt far behind, by the ſimple attractions of a mean dependent—a creature of no note—whoſe family

family no one could or was curious to trace, who appeared to have been educated in privacy, and now wanted whatever ſhe had acquired for her daughters, that is, the manners of the world, and the air of *ton*. Ten thouſand circumſtances ſhewed Peregrina's ignorance of high life;---ſhe bluſhed when ſpoken to;---ſhe was embarraſſed when ſtared at:——ſhe often ſtopped ſhort when ſpeaking, if attentively liſtened to;———ſhe never diſguiſed her thoughts;—ſhe did not praiſe univerſally: ſhe could not flatter; and yet, horrible to think on!—Peregrina, the poor dependent of the Haccombes, was noticed,---was attended to, when the lady Morays were neglected---ſhe was admired by ſuch as could praiſe---ſhe was literally growing the faſhion;---and the young men buzzed round her.

It was not to be expected that the young ladies ſhould have more charity than their mamma. Lady Grace and lady Suſan

Sufan were reſtrained from invective, only by the contemptuous reception a few of their firſt efforts had met with; for the tide of opinion was againſt them, and they found they ſhould be ſingular in oppoſing it; but whatever perſonal mortifications, neglects, or rudeneſſes they could beſtow on this unoffending enemy, ſhe was ſure to receive at their hands. Their converſation uniformly expreſſed their diſdain of all beneath them: they affected to talk in a jargon peculiar to the great, and never failed glancing obliquely, if they did not rail openly, at whatever diſtinguiſhed *that Miſs Lamorne*, the ſtyle by which ſhe was always mentioned by the mother and daughters, in their private cabal.

It happened one evening, when Mrs. Haccombe was to fill her rooms with one of her largeſt aſſemblies, that Miſs Lamorne, from a cold got at the Opera, was too ill to dreſs fitly for the occaſion; but

Mr. Haccombe, ever earneſt for her being ſeen, could not diſpenſe with her appearing; and Mrs. Barnby promiſing to make a due apology for her, ſhe conſented to be in the drawing-room. Though not vain of her beauty, and attributing much of what was ſaid to her to the faſhion, which ſhe ſaw procured flattery where there were no pretenſions, ſhe was never negligent of her looks; and though permitted by the kindneſs of her friends to conſult her health alone, ſhe was hurt at the idea of looking, as in her playful vivacity ſhe termed it, *like an owl.* She therefore, truſting to her own genius, deſigned and executed a ſpecies of head-dreſs, which, while it ſecured her from cold, was highly ornamental, and the greateſt embelliſhment of her beauty ſhe had yet appeared with——it was ſimply Grecian; an oſtrich feather rendered it dreſſy, and a few elegant trinkets about her throat and neck, took off all appearance of neceſſity.

But when dreſſed, and in her place, before the arrival of any other company than a few ladies who had dined *en famille*, ſhe was mortified by attracting the particular notice of Sir Edward, who in one of his moſt troubleſome fits, left the bottle and the gentlemen, and made her liſten while he told in the moſt incoherent, unintelligible manner, one of the ſupernatural ſtories of the Germans. He was deep in the legend of *Number-nip*, which he had juſt been reading, when Mr. Haccombe, who had ſtaid away as long as he could endure abſence from Peregrina, brought with him lord Surcheſter and the reſt of the ſmall dinner party. Mrs. Haccombe drew her friendly peer to a window, but could not keep his eyes from wandering towards Miſs Lamorne. Other company preſently came in; and things returned to their uſual courſe.

Amongſt ſome of the firſt, were Lady Kerbell and the Lady Morays, who juſt paying

paying their due attention to the miſtreſs of the houſe, and chatting a little with Mrs. Barnby, paſſed Peregrina without any other notice than a ſcoul, which Lady Kerbell gave, to ſee what impediment ſhe had bruſhed againſt.——Peregrina, not aware that an affront was deſigned, curtſied; but the counteſs's northern joints could not bend in return, and having ſeated herſelf at a card-table, and made due uſe of her opera-glaſs, ſhe left her daughters to manage the family intereſts.

The young ladies never played cards---they were expenſive things, and confining them to a ſpot, gave leſs ſcope to their powers. They therefore roved about, never omitting the adjuſtment of their perſons, as they paſſed the ſplendid mirrors. Lady Grace at laſt caught mad Sir Edward, who had hitherto remained near Miſs Lamorne, making the moſt ridiculous obſervations on thoſe who entered. He was now placed between the Scots

belles in a diſtant corner; and their geſtures, looks, and loud laughing, declared that Peregrina was not only the ſubject of their converſation, but the object of their ridicule, becauſe ſhe had the effrontery to appear to advantage in a head-dreſs not ſtrictly in the faſhion.

After about ten minutes' ſport of this kind; and when the diſtreſs it occaſioned the victim of their mirth was a little abated, by a circle that had formed round her, Sir Edward, whom they ſeemed to be urging forward, croſſed the room to Miſs Lamorne, and with his privileged oddity ſtaring full in her face, put this blunt queſtion to her. "Pray, you Miſs, are you painted?"—The ladies near her would have driven him away, but he would not depart without an anſwer, which, to their great ſurpriſe, Miſs Lamorne gave in the affirmative! and without the leaſt diſcompoſure! He ſtretched out his hands with a deep Oh! The Lady Morays exulting cried,

cried, "Now, Edward, your guineas---you have loſt your wager!" How the matter terminated in that corner, Peregrina did not obſerve; for her attention was called on by a Mrs. Hammond, a little fairy kind of woman with flaxen hair, fine eyes, a *well-made* complexion, which hid bad features, and a ſtudied manner, which hid a bad heart. Speaking with her teeth ſhut, that their irregularity might be leſs obſerved, and trundling every rough conſonant on her tongue to ſhew the clearneſs of her articulation; ſhe expreſſed her aſtoniſhment, not that Miſs Lamorne uſed art to heighten her beauty, but that ſhe ſhould *confeſs* it. "Why really," ſaid Peregrina, "I ſee no reaſon for diſguiſing it.---I have done no harm, and why ſhould I deny it?---When I was dreſt to day, Mrs. Barnby thought I looked pale. She deſired me to give myſelf a little more colour, and offered me what ſhe uſes; but I did not think it would ſuit my complexion---it is too orange for me---ſo I got

got ſome of the water-colours I uſe for painting flowers, and I put a little on each cheek. I aſked Mr. and Mrs. Haccombe firſt, and they had no objection; and indeed I think I look the better for it. I ſee no more impropriety in it than in changing the colour of my hair by powder, if thoſe I live with like it; but I ſhould be very much aſhamed of it, if I did it to deceive. I have aſked all my particular acquaintancehow they like me in it."

The party round her now mingling with others of their acquaintance, Peregrina was able to ſee the Lady Morays, whom Sir Edward had left, and who had now between them Hamilton Courtland, newly come in. Him too they ſeemed egging on to ſome folly; and he preſently, with ingenuous modeſty and a very proper reluctance in his countenance, came up to Miſs Lamorne, with whom he was *diffidently* acquainted, and requeſting her forgiveneſs of the rudeneſs impoſed on him, begged in

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the name of the Lady Morays, to know who was her milliner. With great preſence of mind, perceiving now the drift of the young ladies' wit, ſhe told him his apology was unneceſſary, when he ſaid whom he came from, and begged him to anſwer for her to the young ladies, that in this inſtance herſelf was her milliner.---- Hamilton coloured deeper than before, bowed, ſighed, and retired.

The adjuſtment of a *vingt-un* table in another room, drew Peregrina thither; and in a farther room, where was at preſent no company, ſhe perceived Sir Edward walking backwards and forwards very ſoberly, but in deep thought. She took no notice of it. The table was formed; and ſhe herſelf declining to riſque her money at a game ſo very precarious, ſat out near three young ladies with whom ſhe was not very intimately acquainted.

Theſe

Theſe were the Miſs Affingtons, heireſſes of a banker, with immenſe fortunes. They had witneſſed the conduct of the Lady Morays, who with Lady Kerbell, had juſt paſſed through the room to attend another party; and who, as they bruſhed by Peregrina, aloud expreſſed their hope, that they ſhould meet no *low* people where they were going. A deportment ſo far beyond what even the licenſe of unlimited faſhion allows, drew on them the general attention and general cenſure. Sir Edward, hearing his name mentioned, came forward and joined in the converſation with the Miſs Affingtons and ſeveral others, who did not mean quite ſo well as they did, but whom their importance awed into concurrence.

Miſs Harriet Affington, the ſecond of theſe fiſters, aſked him how he could be the bearer of ſo fooliſh a meſſage. He replied, that he had juſt as much curioſity as Lady Grace Moray. He was aſked what

what he had gained by his curiofity. He anfwered, that he had got a great deal; for that he had found out, that Mifs Lamorne was as great a fool as other people. Harriet, more provoked at his bluntnefs than Peregrina, took up her caufe; and though he feemed in one of his moft rational moods, fhe, by her arguments, brought him to confefs, that however to be reprobated the odious and naufeous practice of enamelling and face-daubing certainly is, yet that a young woman whom indifpofition had robbed of her healthy looks might, without a confignment to the infernal regions, lay a fhade of innoxious pink upon her cheek, and that as fhe meant it as no deception, it was not criminal. Neither of the Mifs Affingtons, nor even Peregrina herfelf, attempted to defend it as the act of wifdom. Sir Edward, to all appearance at that moment perfectly reafonable, owned *himfelf* convinced, but his *prejudices* ftill as ftrong as ever; and Peregrina completely mortified, and feeling

ing that in his lucid intervals his good ſenſe had an irreſiſtable influence over her, with the tears ſtarting in her eyes, declared, that as it was the firſt time of her ever adopting the fooliſh practice, it ſhould be the laſt. Her new friends could not ſhake her reſolution; the moral ſenſe was hurt, and ſhe was inflexible: Sir Edward was ſilent and withdrew to join the neareſt company in all the nonſenſe of his inſanity.

Miſs Affington, heartily provoked at the Lady Morays, whoſe tongues perhaps ſhe thought their narrow fortunes ſhould have reſtrained, propoſed to her ſiſters, as a means of humbling their inſolence, that at a ball which Lady Cottiſbrooke meant to give the enſuing week on Lady Almerina's coming of age, they and all their friends and connexions, as far as they could influence them, ſhould adopt the faſhion of Miſs Lamorne's new turban. The meaſure was coincided in; and all the young people

who

who were to be of the party and were then preſent, agreed to it: Mrs. Hammond amongſt the reſt, though not entirely to her own ſatisfaction; for ſhe was little, and ſo ambitious of being tall, that let waiſts be at what medium they would, the pinnacle of her head-dreſs was ever diſproportionately far from the centre of her figure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Miss Lamorne had now ſpent ſix weeks in Devonſhire place, in a round of giddy amuſement, that far from affording her opportunity for improving what ſhe had acquired, left her ſcarcely a moment to think; for the fatigue of the day made reſt abſolutely neceſſary whenever ſhe could get it, and immediate ſleep bore her to the regions of fancy as ſoon as her wearied limbs were ſtretched on her bed. She had paſſed the time, though thoughtleſsly, innocently, led by the cuſtoms of a place ſhe was unuſed to, and following the example of thoſe into whoſe ſociety ſhe had been, ſo much to her own ſatisfaction, thrown. She had, as yet, ſeen no cauſe to ſuſpect or even diſtruſt any one of the family; for all ſtill had their original points to carry: Mr. Haccombe ſtill kept up his character of vice-parent, and as ſuch

ſuch made her coſtly preſents, which had always the ſanction of his lady's approbation, who was pleaſed to ſee his paſſion proceeding in a way that ſhe not only truſted would afford her good ground for recrimination, ſhould ſhe ever be driven to extremities, but effectually prevent what ſhe could not but ſometimes fear, lord Surchester's diſcovery, that Miſs Lamorne was a charming woman.

But Mrs. Haccombe moſt woefully deceived herſelf. Peregrina's conduct and converſation every day diminiſhing Mr. Haccombe's firſt hopes, ſtrengthened his ſubſequent reſolution; and he longed for nothing ſo ardently as the death of his wife, to whom he was nevertheleſs civil, for Peregrina's ſake. To procure a larger ſum of money from her uncle than ſhe was wont to aſk, though cuſtom had pretty well blunted her nice feelings on this head, Mrs. Barnby had ſold him a little information, not much calculated for a huſ-

band's quiet in general: it reſpected the intimacy, now grown very obſervable, between lord Surcheſter and Mrs. Haccombe; and the nabob, whoſe ſenſes could not but convince him, that his lady was in no immediate danger of dying, began to flatter himſelf with the nearer proſpect of procuring a divorce: to prevent recrimination, he now grew more cautious in his behaviour to Peregrina, and conferred moſt of his favors on her through the medium of his wife.

The means this righteous party had adopted to circumvent each other, proved the deſtruction of all their private plans; for lord Surcheſter's conſtant acceſs to the houſe on the ſcore of his exertions for Mr. Haccombe, and the jealouſy his lordſhip could not but ſee his loving hoſteſs entertained of Peregrina, encouraged and ſtimulated the good will he had firſt borne her into a paſſion that made him reſolve to protract his preſent amour no longer

than till he could ſecure a ſufficient intereſt in Miſs Lamorne's heart. He did not ſuppoſe her at all more difficult of acceſs than the many he had added to his triumphs: he was confident his ſplendid ſituation muſt dazzle her—it was eaſy to put her out of conceit with that ſhe at preſent held at the pleaſure of perſons whoſe true character it was abundantly in his power to unveil to her; and at worſt he knew the ſtale joke of a promiſe of marriage, which nothing could oblige him to fulfil, would anſwer all purpoſes.

As his ſucceſs depended entirely on his caution, he redoubled his aſſiduities to Mrs. Haccombe, and perceiving how implicitly Peregrina was governed by Mrs. Barnby, he began to pay her attention, which he ſoon ſaw would effectually hoodwink her, by intoxicating her vanity; and towards Peregrina herſelf, his conduct was ſuch a maſter-piece of cunning, that, excepting when he had drank more freely than

than uſual, he now ſeldom paid her even the reſpect due to her. Mr. Haccombe thus grew vigilant, but in the wrong quarter. Mrs. Haccombe's jealouſy went to ſleep juſt when it ſhould have been moſt awake. Mrs. Barnby, as ſoon as ſhe had betrayed her aunt to her uncle, imagined herſelf miſtaken when ſhe had the beſt ground for being confident, and Peregrina fancied the family moſt kind when they were moſt cruel, and lord Surcheſter moſt negligent towards her when ſhe alone occupied his thoughts.---There was a ſtill greater miſtake in which they all joined---but that let time develope; for this is the

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.